H. Hyde (Edward) 1st Earl of Clarendon
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AN ESSAY ON

An ACTIVE and CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE:

AND,

Why the one ſhould be preferred before the other.

By the right honourable,

EDWARD, Earl of CLARENDON,

Lord High Chancellor of England.

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ESSAY

O N

An ACTIVE and CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE:

A N D,

Why the one ſhould be preferred before the other.

IT hath been the buſineſs, or, rather, the vanity and want of buſineſs in many perſons of wit and fancy, eſpecially of the Italian nation, to diſcover and find out, whether an active and practical condition of life, or whether a ſpeculative repoſe, and a life dedicated wholly to contemplation, be to be elected and preferred by a prudent man, in order to his own content and happineſs; and they have taken great pains to determine, from the conſideration of mankind, from his conſtitution, appetites and affections, and from the accidents of human life, and the inſtability of fortune in the tranſactions thereof,

and even from the end of the creation of man, and his own moſt juſtifiable end in life, which of the two he ſhould dedicate himſelf unto, and ſet his heart upon; when they might have as profitably ſpent their time in the diſquiſition, whether a man who is obliged to make a long journey, ſhould chooſe to undertake it upon a black or a bay horſe, and take his lodging always in a public inn, or at a friend's houſe: to which the reſolution, after how long a time ſoever of conſidering, muſt be, that the black horſe is to be made uſe of, if he be better than the bay; and that the inn is to be preferred, if the entertainment be better there, than it is like to be at the friend's houſe. And how light and ridiculous ſoever this inſtance may ſeem to be, it is very worthy to accompany the other debate, which muſt be reſolved by the ſame medium. That a man of a vigorous and active ſpirit, of perſpicacity of judgment, and high thoughts, cannot enter too ſoon into the field of action; and to confine him to retirement, and to ſpend his life in contemplation, were to take his life from him. On the other hand, a dull dif-ſpirited fellow, who hath no faculties of ſoul to exerciſe and improve, or ſuch as no exerciſe or converſation can improve,

may withdraw himſelf as far as he can from the world, and ſpend his life in ſleep, that never was awake; but what kind of fruit this dry trunk will yield by his ſpeculation or contemplation, can no more be comprehended, than that he will have a better and more uſeful underſtanding after he is dead and buried.

For the better going through this diſquiſition, let us firſt examine what theſe men mean by a contemplative life, (for the definition of an active life will be eaſily comprehended) which ought to be embraced with ſo much greedineſs; and we ſhall find that for the moſt part they ſuppoſe or require ſuch preparations towards it, and ſuch qualifications in it, that are no more the natural effects or product of contemplation, than the thoughts and affections are the ſame which carry a man to a horſe-match, and which accompany him to a funeral. They who are the ſtrict admirers and commenders of contemplation, and would have the whole life dedicated to contemplation, have exerciſed themſelves in very little of it; but have taken their model out of the lives of ſome few pious men, whoſe lives have been written long after their deaths, by

men who had heard much of their praiſes, without knowing their perſons; and ſo their actions are tranſmitted to poſterity, according to the fancy of the writer, not the true image of the liver. They annex a ſevere ſolitude for the innocence of it as neceſſary to contemplation, ſince converſation interrupts it; nor will they allow ſtudious men, who uſe indefatigable induſtry in reading and revolving the writings and labours of learned men in the ſeveral ſciences of knowlege, to be in the number of contemplators; ſuppoſing that the variety of their reading, and their continual conſultation with learned men, hath too much ſtirred up their fancies, and provoked their curioſities to a farther acquaintance with the world, and the temptations thereof, which have dazzled and corrupted the integrity of their natural judgments; and theſe men would have a ſolitude and contemplation to be always together, without other books than what ſerve for the help and exerciſe of their private devotions, ſpending all their thoughts upon the contempt of the world, and the love and admiration of the goodneſs of God and of the joys of heaven, and ſuch other excellent ſpeculations of virtue and piety, as never were, or can be the

effect or companion of an original and affected ſolitude; but hath its riſe from obſervation, wiſdom, and experience. They who obſerve and conſider, as there is ſubject-matter enough in the world for ſuch obſervation and conſideration, how very few men there are, how liberally ſoever educated, who are ever by themſelves, or know how to think, may reaſonably wonder how thoſe ſtupid illiterate men, who pretend to dedicate themſelves, but are ſacrificed by the avarice of their friends, to that which they call a contemplative life, can ſpend their miſerable lives; how men who cannot think, and have known nothing of the world, can contemplate upon the vanity and iniquity of it; or how men who have never been inſtructed in the attributes of God, or the myſteries and injunctions of religion, can contemplate the joys of heaven, and the lives of ſaints and angels. Neither virtue nor piety come by nature or by chance, but are learned, and taught, and ſtudied; and contemplation is an art, and the child and faculty of knowlege. The old race of hermits, if there was ever any ſuch, is long ſince expired: St. Jerome, whom they made their Chriſtian pattern, after much experience of the ſoftneſſes and ex-

ceſſes of the world, ſtaid not long in that melancholy retirement; but after ſome good and pious reflections and reſolutions, retired again into the world, and mingled with the greateſt contentions in it. St. Auſtin in a ſhort time left the ſolitude he affected, knowing well that he could do much more good in the cities and company of men, than in the woods and deſarts. Monkery, that was founded in ſolitude and ſilence, and all poſſible care taken by its founder, that it ſhould not be entangled in any offices of religion, but be wholly vacant to cogitations, which can very improperly be called contemplation when they are rude and unpoliſhed, was quickly weary of its inſtitution; and its diſciples made haſte to get themſelves abſolved from the rigour of their rule, and to be manumitted, and infranchiſed into the buſineſs of the world, to be prieſts and preachers and confeſſors; and over and above the enjoyment of their own ample endowments, to be admitted to all the honours and pomp the charge is capable of; inſomuch, that for near a hundred years together, Rome had no biſhop but a monk of the order of St. Bennett, who had done all he could that none of his children ſhould receive any ſpiritual orders, or be converſant in

courts; and ſolitude grew to be ſo much abominated, that there was a particular act made in the council of Clermont, in the year one thouſand ninety-five, by which it was ordained that a monk, who was poſſeſſed of a benefice, ſhould be obliged to have a companion for converſation, leſt he ſhould become brutiſh by being converſant only with ruſtics: ſo little reverence was then entertained for that contemplation which they uow magnify themſelves upon.

It is a difficult thing here to contain myſelf from reproaching and inveighing againſt thoſe orders of religious men and women, who are, under pretence of conſcience and piety, deprived of that liberty which nature requires, and the law of God allows; the one by vows almoſt impoſſible to be kept, and affected and inconvenient habits, which makes them ridiculous to all men at firſt ſight, and expoſes the health of body and mind to apparent danger; and the other to unreaſonable vows and ſtrict incloſure from the reſt of the world: at leaſt, I cannot but enquire by what warrant or permiſſion from God Almighty, by what countenance, teſtimony of example, from the primitive times of Chriſtianty, and the prac-

tice of perſons of confeſſed piety and wiſdom, ſuch an inſtitution, hardly conſiſtent with either, and ſo oppoſite to the benefit and policy of Chriſtian kingdoms and ſtates, hath found credit or commendation, or toleration, in all countries where the Roman religion is received; or rather how it ſupports itſelf (as it is now exerciſed) even againſt the eccleſiaſtical, and civil, and municipal laws of thoſe nations, and againſt the power and juriſdiction and right of all the biſhops and catholic clergy of thoſe countries. For as the laws of the church originally reſtrained all perſons from entering into ſuch vows, without the full conſent and approbation of parents, and before they were of an age much greater than is now required, and for failing in either of theſe points declared their vows to be void; ſo they were always under the government and juriſdiction of biſhops. An abby and a monaſtery was in the ſame degree of ſubjection to the biſhop, as any other pariſh or church in his dioceſe was; and the exemption of them from the diſcipline by the pope's authority, is ſuch an encroachment upon the laws of all countries, and upon the dignity and prerogative of princes, that it ſhakes the foundation of all government in all

catholic ſtates, and is evidence of the inſatiable ambition that is inſeparable from the biſhop of Rome, to inſinuate under the notion of ſpiritual power, and to poſſeſs himſelf of the temporal authority. For what can be more temporal, than the power which the pope aſſumes over all monaſteries and religious houſes; and which makes all thoſe inhabitants, which are a vaſt number of people, more his ſubjects than the king's; and which in ſome fatal conjuncture may probably prove the ruin of the greateſt monarchy? Since it is notorious enough, that in all catholic rebellions thoſe fraternities are diſpoſed by the pope, though againſt the king; of which there needs no other inſtance, than that never to be forgotten league in France, ſupported by three ſucceſſive popes againſt a catholic king, in the end aſſaſſinated by the impious hand of a friar. After which there can be nothing more ſtupendious, than that princes who allow ſome ſpiritual juriſdiction to reſide in the pope, do not cauſe it to be defined, at leaſt by the body of their own clergy, what that ſpiritual juriſdiction doth ſignify, and how it muſt extend; and they would then ſee how far thoſe religious fraternities would ſubmit, and conform to thoſe definitions. When

I ſay, that thoſe foundations, under the rules they now profeſs, have no warrant from ſcripture, nor from the example or practice of antiquity; I am not ignorant that there were many pious and devout men who did, upon ſeveral occaſions, and in ſeveral ſeaſons, ſeparate and retire themſelves from the ſplendor and noiſe of the world, to a quiet and peaceable ſolitude: and this was moſt practiſed in the infancy of Chriſtianity and in Pagan regions; and had no more reſemblance to the rules and conſtitutions of theſe men, than St. Bruno had to the prophet Elijah. But ſince the argument we are upon, of a ſolitary and contemplative life, to which all theſe ſocieties, more or leſs, pretend to be inſtituted for, doth naturally enough lead us to take a view of this affected condition of living; let us with ſome liberty conſider the rules they are to obſerve, and the vows they make, (which is the ſoul of their religion) and we ſhall the better be able to examine and make ſome judgment of the piety and merit, the lawfulneſs and warrantableneſs of their profeſſion and obligations; without any purpoſe of reproaching the memory of the founders of thoſe orders, or of the perſons of thoſe who have profeſſed; of whom there

have been very many learned and very pious men: whoſe devotion, and virtue, and integrity of life, deſerve to be reverenced and imitated, though they were not without thoſe weakneſſes, and infirmities and defects, which keeps them from being the objects of adoration which is aſſigned to many of them.

The views then that theſe men make, and which conſtitute their religion, and without making which no man can be admitted to it, are three; of poverty, of chaſtity, and of obedience; and theſe are common to all religious orders, though they have not all the ſame ſignification: which is a wonderful latitude in a vow, and is explained either by ſome original determination by the founder, or by a more modern indulgence or reformation by ſome bull from the biſhop of Rome, who hath power to diſpenſe with and abſolve them from all their vows: and ſo there is a great difference between the poverty of the Benedictins or the Jeſuits, and the poverty of the Capuchins; and yet the vow is the ſame, and in the ſame terms, and without any gloſs upon it, that is taken by all three; but the two former wiſely interpret their vow of poverty

to oblige them ſingly to have no property of their own, but they may enjoy all the effects of wealth and plenty out of the ſtock of the community; the other poor men literally affect poverty in the higheſt degree that life can be preſerved, with what uneaſineſs ſoever, inſomuch as it is not lawful for them to provide or retain what may be neceſſary for to-morrow, nor have two habits nor two pair of ſhoes. Let us now examine the nature and the effect of every one of theſe vows; and from thence examine the benefit and advantage that redounds from thence to the church of Chriſt, or to the proſperity of nations. And in the firſt place, what is the virtue, and where is the beauty of this poverty, that we ſhould ſo much affect it, be ſo ſollicitous for it as to bind ourſelves by an oath, a vow to live in poverty? Indeed, to behave ourſelves honeſtly, and decently, and patiently in poverty, when it ſhall pleaſe God to inflict it upon us, is a virtue and duty the Chriſtian religion obliges us to; not to deſpair whilſt it is upon us, nor to deſpair of overcoming and getting out of it, but to ſubmit to God's good-will and pleaſure, and to wait his time for our delivery, as we do or muſt do in all other puniſhments and diſeaſes with which he

pleaſes to viſit us: for poverty is a puniſhment, and poverty is a diſeaſe, from which we may as lawfully pray to be preſerved or delivered as from the plague; I ſay, it is a puniſhment, a judgment inflicted by God; *The drunkard and the glutton ſhall come to poverty, and drouzineſs ſhall clothe a man with rags*, ſays Solomon *. It is a legacy bequeathed to vice and luxury, and idleneſs; and therefore how it comes to be ſo univerſally deſireable, as to be attained by a vow, to be a foundation in religion, and a proper means to advance it, is very hard to comprehend, and had need of better arguments than are contained in any of the founder's rules, or the bulls which confirm them. If you will believe Solomon, *The deſtruction of the poor is their poverty* †. How it ſhould be a neceſſary ingredient to ſalvation, may be worthy of queſtion. It was indeed frequently practiſed in the infancy of Chriſtianity, to ſell all that they had and give it to the poor; but it was never a precept or injunction of Chriſtianity. It is true, that our Saviour, to convince the vanity and hypocriſy of a Phariſee, who bragged as if he had performed the whole law, bid him *ſell all he had*, etc. which he knew he would not

* Prov. xxiii. 21. † Prov. x. 15.

do, but went away melancholy. Poverty will never make a man a Chriſtian; nor when he is one, can he do as much good as if he were rich. The giving all they had to the poor, which was, I ſay, practiſed much in the infancy of religion, was a very efficacious argument to get credit to the perſons who preached, not a principle of the doctrine which they preached: when moſt men were ſo tranſported with the vanity and pleaſure, and wealth of the world, and their hearts ſo much ſet upon it that they loved nothing elſe; men who deſpiſed all that, and gave that away which would have given them all that, and impoſed thoſe ſeverities upon themſelves which were moſt contrary to what all others affected, could not but be conceived to find ſome inward pleaſure and joy in the doctrine which they profeſſed: yet, I ſay, it was never a precept and injunction of Chriſtianity; there were as good Chriſtians, who did not ſell all they had, kept it and enjoyed it, and, it is probable, did much more good than they who had nothing. We may believe that the expreſſion of *ſelling all that they had, and giving to the poor*, which was never done in our Saviour's own time, is not clearly underſtood; that the diſtribution was

not in their own power, but brought to the apoſtles to be diſtributed as they thought fit, we have reaſon to believe; and if it were poſſible to believe the large volume of the hiſtory of their ſaints, we ſhall find that all they who are remembered chiefly for ſelling all they had, and giving to the poor, are mentioned after their ſale to have built churches and founded religious houſes; which men who had nothing could never have done: ſo that the moſt natural underſtanding of thoſe expreſſions is, that they ſuffered not their eſtates to deſcend to their heirs, but diſpoſed them to pious uſes. Poverty never made ſuch alms.

Sure we are, that they who ſold or gave all they had, never lived themſelves afterwards by begging; many laboured and took pains for their living, it may be were contented to receive alms from a charitable hand; but how men came to be enjoined to beg for their living, how begging came to be of the eſſence, to be a badge of religion, we ſhall not find till thoſe times in which religion was degenerated, and private men took upon them to contradict nature, deprive them of the moſt precious treaſure of health, and of the liberty that God hath not only permitted, but di-

rected to be uſed: *The ſluggard will not plough by reaſon of the cold, therefore ſhall he beg in harveſt, and have nothing* *, is the judgment the Spirit of God hath inflicted upon lazineſs, upon men who will not labour for their living It is a ſtrange preſumption, a contradiction of the will and mind of God himſelf, to erect ſocieties, and conſtitute fraternities, whoſe religion obliges them not to labour, and requires them to beg. That there ſhould be a body of a hundred thouſand Chriſtians, aud there are many ſuch bodies, whoſe conſcience will not ſuffer them to work, and whoſe impudence to beg is juſtifiable, is ſuch a contempt of ſcripture, and rebellion againſt the politic laws of all government, that leſs than the believing that our Saviour himſelf gave the rule from a mountain in Italy, as God himſelf gave the law to Moſes from mount Sinai, cannot excuſe; which no other begging order but that of St. Francis pretends to do. Little did king David think, who was a prophet, and a poet, and an orator, when he poured out his complaint and curſe againſt the greateſt enemies of God, many believe upon the foreſight of Judas; *Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them ſeek their bread*

* Prov. xx. 4.

alſo out of deſolate places; that there would ever be a race of God's children, who would continually beg their bread without being vagabonds, and ſeek and find it too in the moſt deſolate places, amongſt people much poorer than themſelves, who beg, and it may be ſteal, that they may give to a begging friar. We may lawfully enquire what ſpell there is in begging; a thing ſo infamous under the law and the goſpel, that it ſhould be thought the way to heaven. That infamous ſteward, who had the impudence to cheat his lord, and to waſte his eſtate, when he was called to an account, had yet the modeſty to be aſhamed to beg; there was ſuch an univerſal brand upon begging, that he would make any other ſhift rather than be reduced to beg; it ſeems he was weak and impotent, which is the common excuſe, he could not, he was not able to dig, yet he was aſhamed to beg. Begging hath often found an excuſe, often met with compaſſion in many countries, but was never made, or allowed to be made a profeſſion, by any well-ordered government; it hath even been infamous; and though there was a certain beggar that got into heaven, it was a metaphorical beggar, but a beggar in a parable. I confeſs, it is a very hard

matter to handle this myſtery of iniquity with that gravity, that any thing that relates to religion would require; eſpecially ſince ſo many very eminent men for learning, and truly I believe, of pious and devout lives, have grown up in ſeveral ages amongſt them who have obſerved thoſe rules and orders; but we may lawfully believe, that they would have been more learned, and probably have been as pious and devout, if they had been educated according to thoſe collegiate conſtitutions, which were the proper ſeminaries of learning and religion, in all ages, before they, their rules, or their vows were heard of in the world. We may believe, that there is not that univerſal contagion covers thoſe gardens, that no wholeſome plant for food and medicine can be planted or grow near it; and yet we may believe too, that the ſoil is not ſo fertile, nor the air ſo pure, that it nouriſhes all it feeds to ſuch a wonderful luſtre in religion, that by obſerving his vows he is as ſure to go to heaven, as if he were there already, as every novice of the order of St. Francis is, when he hath made his vows; when the ſuperior, who admits him, declares, *Et ego, ex parte Dei, ſi has regulas obſervaris, promitto tibi vitam eter-*

nam. It is not at all to be wondered at, it would be in truth a great wonder if it were otherwiſe, that amongſt ſo many millions of the regular clergy, there ſhould not ſometimes a man of eminence in learning and virtue appear; for there muſt be many millions, when the general of St. Francis's order alone can bring into the field one hundred thouſand ſubjects, and leave every altar ſufficiently ſupplied and provided for: what numbers then muſt ariſe of monks and friars, and other regular orders, which ſwarm in every kingdom? And when any ſuch man appears, the world is ſure to hear of him; but of the multitude of thoſe, who, having made thoſe vows, are put to death for the moſt odious crimes and wickedneſſes that can be committed; of thoſe who, out of ſorrow and deſperation for having made thoſe vows, have made themſelves away, and become their own executioners; of thoſe who, continuing all their lives in the ſame profeſſions, have never produced any fruit that is the effect of ſtudy or induſtry, or done any worthy action whereby to be remembered; of thoſe who, for notorious vice and debauchery, (which muſt be very notorious and infamous) are ejected and expelled out of thoſe corporations and

fraternities, after they have made their vows; and laſtly, of thoſe, who have been, and are ſheltered under thoſe vows, to be lazy and uſeleſs to mankind, under the ſtile of lay-brothers, *fruges conſumere nati:* I ſay, of thoſe there is no inventory, nor record kept; and if there were, every nation would bluſh to behold what a rabble of wretches they have nouriſhed, for every ſingle man who hath been a honour to the church or ſtate. And after all this, the old collegiate inſtitution, the nurſeries and ſchools of the too much neglected ſecular clergy in all kingdoms, have in all times brought out more men of extraordinary parts in knowlege, and eminency of good life, than all the monaſteries of the country; and by the computation the world can make, the ſingle college of Sorbonne produces more of that kind in every age, than all the regular foundations in France, though you reckon the Jeſuits in the number, as you ought to do; though they have no mind to be comprehended under that appellation, but would rather be thought collegiate, if that did not imply too much ſubjection to the biſhop.

Let us, in the next place, take a ſhort view

of the mortifications and conſtraints, not voluntary, but enjoined and impoſed; and ſo cannot be ſo properly called mortification, as that which is the effect of a devout mind, and from thence impoſed upon a man's ſelf by himſelf; and conſider whether the knowlege or practice of Chrianity is advanced, or improved, by thoſe rigorous ſeverities. Why thoſe antique, uneaſy, unhandſome and unwholeſome clothes? why no linen, no ſhoes, or ſuch as are no more guard againſt cold than none? why to this uncomely and uncleanly wardrobe, ſo little meat as cannot ſatisfy nature, and leſs ſleep than it requires? It is not natural to believe that there can be great fervour of devotion from theſe cold ingredients; nor can men, who believe the way to heaven to be full of briars and thorns, chuſe to walk barefoot. Is health the greateſt benefit and bleſſing that God can beſtow upon us in this world? inſomuch as he cannot commend the love of himſelf to us under a more conjuring and prevalent expreſſion, than becauſe *it ſhall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.* * Whatſoever he would endear to us, that we may ſet a true

* Prov. iii. 8.

value and price upon it, he deſcribes by what we do or ought to value moſt; *The tongue of the wiſe is health* *. And are we grateful enough for this precious jewel, in a voluntary endeavour to drive this health from us, at leaſt to impair it; to dry this marrow which he hath given us as comfort and ſtrength to our bones? Mortification may be very ſeaſonable, ſometimes neceſſary; it leaves the root unhurt, and preſerves even the ſap, and only dries up, or pulls away ſome ebullition, or excreſcence from the too much heat thereof; and it may be nature itſelf is the beſt judge of the ſeaſon, and of the proportion when this mortification ought to be applied: it is firſt ſenſible of its own rankneſs, and of any ill humour that invades it, and hates all exceſſes as much as it doth the effects of them, pain and ſickneſs. If we do not corrupt the integrity of our nature by our own ill manners and ill converſation, nature will always be a very good counſellor and a very good phyſician to us; but this conſternation, this maceration, by perplexing all the faculties of nature, and enervating the ſtrength of it, is a ſawcy contradiction of

* Prov. xii. 18.

God's wiſdom in the creation, and appointing thoſe offices to be performed by cold and weakneſs for which he aſſigned warmth and heat; and if piety and prayer be the reſult of a devout mind, there ſhould be as much care taken to ſupport the health and vigour of that mind, as to cheriſh the body for the ſtrongeſt exerciſe or encounter; and we may as reaſonably believe, that a man can wreſtle beſt when he is in a fit of a quartan ague, as that he can pray moſt effectually when his limbs are rotting with cold, and his ſpirits failing for want of bread. They who will impoſe a ſeverity, and exerciſe a diſcipline upon themſelves, which nature doth abhor, and God doth not command, ought to do it at their own charges, and can neither expect reward in heaven, nor reverence upon earth, for their folly; and a *quis requiſivit*, may put them to a bluſh in one place, as it will do in the other. He who affects poverty, and prefers ſickneſs before health, that he may be devout, may as well pray for the plague that he may have good company. No man will deny, that faſting is a pious and religious exerciſe, but it is as phyſic, not as diet; he that faſts too much, doth not faſt at all; for no man can be ſaid to faſt, who is

not able to eat; and it is worth the obſervation, that in that religious exerciſe the phyſician is allowed a judicature above the biſhop, and he can diſpenſe with it for the health of his patient, though the church enjoins it: ſo tender and compaſſionate is divinity and religion to preſerve, to cheriſh, and cultivate that comfort of human life, health; whilſt thoſe who profeſs religion are ſo mercileſs and tyrannical, that they will not diſpenſe with a man, who by his rule is bound to fiſh, to eat fleſh for the recovery of his health or preſervation of his life; and the pope himſelf, who diſpenſes with all other vows, diſſolves all contracts, and abſolves all perjuries, diſpenſes with adulteries, and legitimates baſtards, cannot give a poor Carthuſian leave to eat a chicken, though it would redeem him from the grave. What this kind of pageantry, theſe ſtratagems of ſupererogation may amount to in heaven, God only knows; but we do not know that he hath forbidden us on earth to be as merry in the conſideration of them, as it is lawful for us to be at other ſpectacles of vanity and levity. If I intended this diſcourſe for any other purpoſe, than the informing and exerciſing my own underſtanding, I would not obſerve (becauſe the obſerva-

tion may do hurt) that faſting, which was commanded with ſo many inconvenient circumſtances under the law, is no goſpel-duty, no precept enjoined. We ſhall find it ſometimes, not very often, commended in ſome devout perſons who uſed it according to the law, when our Saviour himſelf and his apoſtles were ſtrict obſervers of the law; but in all the New Teſtament not once poſitively enjoined to be practiſed, as all other Chriſtian duties are: becauſe it cannot, it ought not to be uſed but according to the conſtitution and tempers of mens bodies; and to oblige all men to faſt alike, is as unreaſonble, as to command them to wear the ſame clothes, or to keep the ſame diet.

Let us ſee now whether their other vow, of chaſtity, bears better fruit than that of poverty; whether it be more lawful, more neceſſary, than the other. That chaſtity is a Chriſtian duty required of all men, and enjoined to all men, is not, nor cannot be denied by any Chriſtian; and the chaſtity of the marriage-bed is as much chaſtity as the chaſtity of a virgin, and as commendable, and as meritorious; to which our vow in baptiſm and our vow in marriage as much

oblige us, as any other vow can do. If the commandment of God doth not reſtrain us, it is not probable that a vow will do it; and if the true intention and meaning of this vow may be judged by the natural comment of the actions of moſt who take it; it is to be interpreted as an oath againſt what is lawful, and in our power to do, rather than to reſtrain us from what is unlawful; and if it were not for the ſophiſm and diſſimulation of interpreting an oath in a ſenſe contrary to theſe who adminiſter it, he doth much better comply with his vow of chaſtity, who marries, and commits no other treſpaſs againſt it but in the marriage, then he that lets himſelf looſe to the remedies of fornication and adultery, which all the world knows are too much indulged by thoſe, and not more by any than thoſe who have taken a vow of chaſtity: nor do very many of the caſuiſts diſſemble the determining, that fornication is a much leſs ſin than marriage, and give ſuch a reaſon for it as may induce us to believe, that the end of the vow is only againſt marriage, and not againſt the other; for ſay they, he that falls into that ſin by the impetuoſity of nature, hath committed only one ſin that repentance abſolves him from;

but he, who marries lives in a conſtant courſe of ſinning, that excludes repentance: and ſo by this ſubtlety they preſume to make that an unpardonable ſin, which was inſtituted by God himſelf as a proper and natural remedy againſt ſin; and permit the other, (for excuſing in thoſe caſes is permitting,) which God Almighty hath pronounced damnation upon. If there be not ſome ſuch purpoſe of deluſion, why a vow to be chaſte, rather than a particular vow for the obſervation of the other nine commandments, if a vow be a good expedient towards the keeping them? We ſhould think that every ſin hath too much weight in itſelf, to be made more heavy by our inventions: no man can pretend that chaſtity is more a virtue, to have more of merit, by being preſerved under a vow, than if it were upon the pure impulſion of grace and virtue; but on the contrary, if it be violated, the ſin is much greater, by the addition of that of perjury to the other of uncleanneſs. It may reaſonably be ſuſpected or imagined, when our own vows and oaths are called to ſtrengthen God's commandments, that there is ſome ſtratagem to evade them, and to put ſome gloſs and interpretation upon the duty, that may make it ſome-

what elſe than what he hath enjoined: no man can believe that the chaſtity of a pious and devout mother is leſs meritorious, of an inferior allay, to that of the daughter miſerably betrayed into a monaſtery to ſave a portion, and into a vow to keep that which is not in her power to loſe, otherwiſe than by vexatious and repining wiſhes; and it is worth the enquiry, whether there be not much of the virtue itſelf loſt or diminiſhed, in the reſtraints, conſtraints, and incloſure, to which it is made liable. Who ever heard of the temperance of a Capuchin, who is allowed no more to eat than will ſuſtain nature? *Multum intereſt, utrum peccare aliquis nolit, an neſciat.* No man ever attained the fame of ſobriety, who never had it in his power to drink any thing but water. A man who was never in war, nor ſaw an army, may as well pretend to the honour of a great general by having read Cæſar's Commentaries and Polybius, as a miſerable nun can pretend to the glory of chaſtity, who knows nothing more of it than by reading the canting language of mother Tereſa, and the lives of the virgin martyrs. *Inſtrumenta illis explicandæ nequitiæ deſunt.* It ceaſes to be virtue when there is no election; and a man who is

tied in a room by a chain, may as reaſonably expect to be thought to be delighted with contemplation, as a woman ſhall be believed to be devoted to chaſtity, who is ſhut up from all poſſible converſation with mankind. Of the ſad effects and conſequences of theſe unhappy vows and incloſures, every monaſtery can give inſtances enough; and the courts of judicatory, of judgments given on their behalf who have found means to eſcape from thoſe captivities, and ſued for their portions, and the ſentences thereupon, are publiſhed at large in all their pleadings.

In the laſt place then, let us conſider the third vow, of obedience; which hath ſo fair an aſpect, that it can hardly be ſuſpected to have any evil intention; it prevents confuſion, and ſupports order and government; where there is no obedience, there can be no government. Obedience is ſuch an evangelical virtue and precept, that you ſhall rarely find it uſed throughout the ſcripture in an ill ſenſe; commands may be unreaſonable and unjuſt, and yet the obedience is requiſite They who are under the obligation of obedience, are excuſed for doing many ill things; and therefore, a wife who receives ſtolen

goods from her huſband, without any guilt in the theft, ſhall not be puniſhed, becauſe ſhe ought to obey her huſband, and ought not to ſuſpect him, and leſs to accuſe him. But there are commands ſo notoriouſly unjuſt, and unqueſtionably unlawful, that no perſon ought to be obedient to them. Let us therefore examine whether this vow doth not intend ſuch a kind of obedience as they wiſh ſhould be obligatory in thoſe caſes; that it ſhould be an obedience that ſhould controul obedience. They do not pretend that this vow obliges them to the obedience of the laws of the country, or of the magiſtrate in the country where they live; nay, not the canons and conſtitutions of the church; to the which, though they profeſs obedience, they do not think they have broke this vow, when they have broken one or more of them. The ſtate then is not the more ſafe or ſecure for their having made this vow of obedience; it may be ſo much the contrary, that it may be undone by the influence of this vow; it is a vow of obedience to their ſuperiors of that order, of which they are, excluſive to all others, to the rector or ſuperior of the monaſtery or convent, to the provincial of the ſame order, to their general, and,

as the upper and higheſt wrung of the ladder, to the pope, where all their obedience is terminated. So then, let the law preſcribe what it will, and the king command what he will, their obedience to either is not the ſubject-matter of this vow; but whatever the one or the other enjoins, is controuled by the pope; which enables him to diſturb the peace of all kingdoms, as far as the regulars of thoſe kingdoms are able to aſſiſt him; and how much that is, the relapſes in ſeveral kingdoms have too fully declared; and therefore, every catholic prince is to value his ſecurity upon the friendſhip of the pope, more than upon the fidelity of his own ſubjects: whereas, all the biſhops and ſecular clergy have their dependence ſo entirely and ſolely upon the crown, that it is not in the power of the pope himſelf to ſeduce them from their allegiance; and why they ſhould not be able to diſcharge all thoſe offices in the church, which were originally committed to them, without the help of thoſe interlopers, may be juſtly wondered at; and that theſe vow-makers ſhould be thought ſo neceſſary, when every one of the three vows is directly againſt the wealth, or againſt the ſtrength and peace of the kingdom; and is ſo far from any foundation in

policy, that it is in the face of all politic conſtitutions, and worthy of wonder rather at the folly of thoſe times, which permitted men to be founders at other mens charges, to draw a company of men together to be fed and kept by thoſe who know them not, to eſtabliſh laws and rules contrary and deſtructive to policy, to make vows contrary to nature, and to introduce factions into church and ſtate, by ſuperinducing a ſovereign juriſdiction over the conſcience of thoſe who are born ſubjects to another prince; and laſtly, to conſtitute a new and contradictory clergy, which renounce all obedience to biſhops: I ſay, all this is rather worthy of wonder, than future approbation or connivance, that the church may be reduced within that incloſure in which our Saviour left it, to be directed and inſtructed by learned and pious biſhops, in ſubjection to, and under the government of, thoſe Chriſtian kings who are appointed to reign over us.

To return then to that kind of contemplative life from whence this excurſion led us; and to the virtue and merit whereof theſe monaſtics, or ſome of them, do pretend, as founded and dedicated to contemplation. If the diſquiſition we

have already made concerning them doth exempt us from taking further consideration of them and their obligations, we will make no stay in considering that solitary kind of life, which hath heretofore been affected by some pious persons, and whose examples many of those cloisters would be thought to follow; forgetting that they had no other cloisters than the wild forest, and trees for their habitation, nor any other company than of beasts, more innocent, for the most part, than the men from whose conversation they retired: which unhappy reason might in this degenerated age of license persuade them to retire to the same solitude, but *omnia nobis mala solitudo persuadet*, and there is no such man in the world, that is known and cared for, that owns and avows such a solitude; and the little number of hermits that yet inhabit the world, are the most absurd, ignorant, stupid creatures that can be seen; and sufficiently manifest the weariness they have of being alone, by the content they take to be seen and spoken to; and exactly make good the old observation, that there is a race of men, *cui non satius sit cum quolibet esse quam secum*: which is the best, how lamentable excuse soever, that too many men have for never being alone.

We will ſuppoſe therefore, that the meaning of this compariſon, or rather enquiry into the preference of an active and a contemplative life, is, to enquire whether a man who engages himſelf in the buſineſs of the world, and by degrees comes into the adminiſtration of a great part of it, doth by his activity become a better member of the ſtate in which he lives, attains to be a wiſer man, and finds within himſelf a greater tranquillity and conſolation of mind; or whether he who declines the experience of worldly actions, or bearing any part in the managery of them, and retires to the reading the beſt and the wiſeſt books, and to the converſation that ſuch a retirement is like to give him the opportunity of, may not thereby arrive to faculties, which may equally enable him to advance the honour, and ſervice, and benefit of his country; to a wiſdom more infallible, by the advantage he hath of leiſure to peruſe the beſt books, in which he is converſant, with the manners and diſpoſitions and natures of all nations, as well as with their actions and lives, and often finds this very queſtion diſputed and determined; and from theſe inquiſitions, and the obſervations which will naturally occur to a diſpaſſionate conſiderer, may not at leaſt equally reſult ſuch

a ſerenity of mind, ſuch a maſtery of all inconvenient affections and paſſions, as may conſtitute that knowlege, and peace, and quiet, that is the comfort and bleſſing of the higheſt conditions of life. And I conceive, from the queſtion thus ſtated, and upon the ſeveral branches thereof, all things may be ſaid, which are pertinent to the full conſideration of the argument. But then we muſt firſt agree upon the ſignification of all terms and expreſſions which we ſhall uſe, and upon ſuch equal conceſſions to both, as may not give ſuch qualifications to the one above the other, as may make him ſuperior at the firſt moment of entering into the liſts: as we muſt not ſuppoſe him who is dedicated to contemplation to be rude and illiterate, for then books will yield him no more obſervation than ſtones will do; nor the other of an active mind to be of an infirm or diſeaſed body, which will put a quick end to his activity. We muſt then ſuppoſe them to be equally qualified for the work they have to do; that he who deſigns an active life, hath thoſe parts and faculties which contributes moſt to the advancement of that deſign; I ſpeak of thoſe parts and faculties which are his own, and from within, not thoſe from without,

in the aſſiſtance of friends and patrons; and that the other, who retires to contemplation, is as well qualified towards it, that he hath at leaſt a love of learning, and an inclination to induſtry: and then in God's name let their ſeveral advantages by nature, the warmth and fire in the one, and the flegm and melancholy in the other, aſſiſt and contribute all they can to the luſtre and perfection of each. We will, in the firſt place, begin with the ſurvey of our contemplative man, becauſe we ſhall be longer in finding him out; for the thing not being ſo eaſily reduced to a definition, the perſon cannot be ſo eaſily found. It ſhall ſuffice, that we look upon our contemplative man as a perſon without having ever undergone a part in buſineſs, and without any other knowlege relating thereunto, than he attains to in books, and by that kind of converſation that is natural to that retirement; and I have given him at leaſt as large a field to exerciſe himſelf in as any man hath challenged; and we look upon an active man, as one who is ſo much engaged, entangled, and even oppreſſed with buſineſs, that he hath no time and leiſure to retire to any other kind of contemplation, than every honeſt man (how buſy ſoever) enjoys

from the reflection and obſervation which he makes from his own and the actions of other men; which is as narrow a circle as we can contain him: and we will ſee which of theſe trees bear the better fruit.

We have got the ſtart from our man of buſineſs by the teſtimony of the ſon of Sirach, *The wiſdom of a learned man cometh by the opportunity of leiſure, and he that hath little buſineſs ſhall become wiſe;* and yet it ſeems he would have him have ſome; he doth not ſay, he that hath none: and no doubt by a little, he means buſineſs enough, ſo much as may contribute to wiſdom. The determination of the philoſopher will hold good to the world's end, and he was friend enough to retirement, *imperfectum & languidum bonum eſt in otio ſine actu projecta virtus:* it muſt be the good, and not the eaſe, the contemplative life produces; and the wiſdom and public benefit, not the private wealth, that reſults from the active life, that muſt determine this controverſy. It would very much advance this diſcourſe, if, towards the more perfect modelling it, we could agree upon ſome inſtance of a particular man, or a race of men, who in ſuch a

contemplative life had yielded ſuch fruit and benefit to their countries, as have preſerved their memories ſtill freſh to poſterity; or, who being called out of it to ſerve their country in any active employment, have brought thoſe ready parts and faculties, as have equalled all that experience hath ſupplied, and been crowned with ſucceſs in councils and enterprizes equal to thoſe who have had the advantage of the contrary kind of education. Of this laſt ſort I doubt very few examples will be brought, except they call up ſome of thoſe old Greek and Roman officers, who, either from the ſatiety they had of action, and unwillingneſs to loſe any of the honour they had gotten, or from the oppreſſions they underwent, retired from the noiſe and trouble of all courts and camps, to a ſolitude that may properly be called rather recollection than contemplation; and of this ſort of men inſtances enough may be given both antient and modern, of many excellent perſons who have with great glory and ſucceſs returned into the greateſt crowd of buſineſs of all natures: but all theſe carried the ſame virtue and wiſdom with them into the retirement that they brought back from thence, and were always the children of action, and

lodged only for a ſhort ſpace of time within the quarters of contemplation, and probably too they might have contracted ſome ruſt not eaſily filed off. Of the firſt kind indeed of thoſe who, in, and from, the contemplative life, brought a great treaſure of learning, knowlege and wiſdom into the public ſtores and receptacles, in the improvement, if not the invention of arts and ſciences, and the deviſing many expedients and preſcriptions for the benefit of human life, they reckon Lycurgus and Solon, and all the law-makers, all the philoſophers, all the moſt famous orators, and the beſt hiſtorians, and would have it believed that all learned men led contemplative lives; whereas in truth there were very few, if any of them, who were not much verſed in the buſineſs of the age in which they lived. We cannot doubt but Lycurgus and Solon, and all other law-makers, were not only well ſkilled in the laws of nature, but in the nature of mankind, and the conſtitution, temper, humour and affections of their own citizens, which could be learned only by converſation, experience and obſervation; which diſtinguiſhes the active life from the contemplative or ſpeculative. Ariſtotle was a great courtier, being tutor to the greateſt

king, and in the greateſt court the world then had; and by his good breeding, gave great beauty and luſtre to the philoſopy of the age before him, which had been ſtudied too much in the dark. Can any man think Demoſthenes and Cicero to be contemplative men, when they governed the greateſt actions of their ſeveral republics, and were the moſt active men in both? And though Tully was the greater magiſtrate, having been the higheſt, yet Demoſthenes had the greater power in the counſels of that ſenate, and was as much hated and feared by Alexander as ever the other had been by Cæſar. For the hiſtorians, I thing a man may very warrantably ſay, that there was never yet a good hiſtory written but by men converſant in buſineſs, and of the beſt and moſt liberal education. Polybius was a counſellor, and an officer in a part of the wars which he writ. Livy was in the court of Auguſtus, well known to the emperor, and in great grace and converſation with the favourite, and ſo acquainted with all the tranſactions of the world. Tacitus, beſides his noble extraction, had his education in the near truſt of two great emperors Veſpaſian and Titus, underwent ſeveral great employments and offices in the common-

wealth, and was afterwards conſul in the time of Nerva, after whoſe death he began to writ his hiſtory. It is not a collection of records, or an admiſſion to the view and peruſal of the moſt ſecret letters and acts of ſtate, (though they are great and neceſſary contributions) which can enable a man to write a hiſtory, if there be an abſence of that genius and ſpirit and ſoul of an hiſtorian, which is contracted by the knowlege and courſe and method of buſineſs, and by converſation and familiarity in the inſide of courts, and the moſt active and eminent perſons in the government; all which yields an admirable light, though a man writes of times, and things which were tranſacted for the moſt part before he was born.

Upon this argument we have the inſtances of four eminent perſons of the age in which we live, who were all men, in their ſeveral degrees, of great luſtre in the world, who all wrote hiſtories of the ſame or near the ſame times; inſomuch as there are very few ſignal perſons, and few important actions, which are mentioned in any one of them of which either of the other are ſilent; againſt the veracity of either of which there is no

very material objection, and yet two of theſe are by ſo much preferable before the other two, that the firſt may worthily ſtand by the ſides of the beſt of the antients, whilſt both the others muſt be placed under them: and a man, without knowing more of them, may, by reading their books, find the difference between their extractions, their education, their converſations and judgment. The firſt two are Henry d' Avila and cardinal Bentivoglio, both Italians of illuſtrious birth; the former a Florentine, the other of Ferrara, and ſo proper enough to be called a Roman. D' Avila was an officer of truſt and confidence in the family of the famous Catherine de Medicis, queen, and almoſt king too, of France, during the reign of four great kings of that nation; and had himſelf a command of horſe in the army and enterpriſes of which he writes, and a participation of the counſels. Bentivoglio was of that family, which as princes had governed Bentivoglio for many years; he was clerk of the chamber to Clement the eighth, by or near the time he was twenty years of age; then nuncio in Flanders, and afterwards in France, till he was created cardinal ſhortly after the death of Henry the fourth; and though

his hiſtory be of the war of Flanders, and that of D'Avila of the civil wars of France, yet thoſe countries had ſo much to do with each other, that as they were for the moſt part of the ſame time, ſo they often ſet forth and deſcribe the ſame actions with very pleaſant and delightful variety; and commonly the greateſt perſons they have occaſion to mention were very well known to them both, which makes their characters always very lively. Both their hiſtories are excellent, and will inſtruct the ableſt and wiſeſt men how to write, and terrify them from writing. The other two were Hugo Grotius, and Famianus Strada, who both wrote in Latin upon the ſame argument, and of the ſame time, of the wars of Flanders, and of the Low-Countries. The great Grotius, who may juſtly be eſteemed as good, if not the beſt ſcholar that age brought out in which he lived, had in his education, in his profeſſion, in the offices and employments he bore in his own country whilſt he lived there, and in the encouragements and honours he enjoyed in other courts and kingdoms, when he was baniſhed from his own country, all the converſation and experience that is requiſite to make the ſublimeſt perſon: and a great man he was

to all purpoſes, and could not be without a profound judgment; though it was not of an allay that ſparkled in the French court, where he continued many years ambaſſador for the moſt active crown of Sweden: yet his hiſtory, which he valued above many other his excellent works, and more deliberated upon before it it was finiſhed, and caſt his eye over it more after, did not ſatisfy the expectation the world had of it, neither in the ſpirit and life of it, nor in the clear deſcription of the councils upon which great enterpriſes were undertaken, nor the conduct of thoſe enterpriſes, with a lively repreſentation of perſons and actions, which makes the reader preſent at all they ſay or do; in all which the other two excel, and will admit of no compariſon to be made with them on his behalf; as if the unpoliſhed nature of his country, and the heavy genius of Deſt, where he was born, hung ſome plummets upon his ſpirits, that neither his incomparable parts, and experience in great and active employments, nor the air of France itſelf, could ever ſhake off. Strada had, to the ſubtlety of the climate in which he was born and bred, and to the education of a Jeſuit, who are moſt unreaſonably believed to be the moſt politic peo-

ple in the world, the advantage of being a client and dependent upon the houſe of Parma; and to have the peruſal of all the memorials, letters, commiſſions, and tranſactions of that moſt illuſtrious prince, whoſe actions could not but be a great part of the hiſtory he was to write; and of his moſt renowned mother, who deſerves a place in the firſt rank of the nobleſt women in the world: of all which he was ſo full, that he had no room to contain the other neceſſary advertiſements and collections which are requiſite to compile a legitimate hiſtory; ſo that he hath rather written the life and character of Alexander Farneſius (who deſerved all that could be ſaid of him) than the hiſtory of that time which he pretends to do, and of which he ſcarce mentions any one action, with any vigour of mind or power of words, that hath not relation to that family; which, with the viſible declenſion in his ſecond decade from the exaltation of the firſt, and his having left no materials behind him for a third, which he pretended to have finiſhed, together with ſome pedantry in his ſtile, leaves what he hath write liable to ſome exceptions, though I think not all which cardinal Bentivoglio unreaſonably reproached him with, or rather they who

thought every thing that great cardinal writ, how curſorily and perfunctorily ſoever, worthy to be publiſhed; amongſt which his reflections upon Strada, and ſome other fragments, may be reckoned.

What I ſay of the different value of hiſtories, according to the qualifications of the perſons who write them, no doubt hath been the reaſon that ſo ſmall, if any part of our own is tolerably ſet out: for I cannot reckon any hiſtory or relation, of how long or ſhort time ſoever, performed in any degree of perfection, when as important, or at leaſt very important particulars are totally left out as thoſe which are inſerted, and which were comprehended within the limits of that time, the account whereof is pretended to be given. This may be ſaid of that part which is moſt exact in the hiſtory of England: which proceeds from the want of encouragement of fit perſons, who know how to call for contributions, (for the ableſt man will need large contribution) and are themſelves converſant with the univerſal tranſactions of Chriſtendom during that time of which they write; as he who would write the hiſtory of England during the laſt

hundred years, or any ſpace of time more or leſs before or after that time, will do it very imperfectly, if he doth not take a ſurvey of the councils and actions of all his neighbours, to which many domeſtic actions do ſo much relate, that they are ſcarce to be underſtood without ſome light from the other; which makes annals an imperfect kind of hiſtory, and rather memorials for hiſtory than hiſtory itſelf; and he who would write that of England well, if it be before the time of Henry the eighth, (it will be convenient ſince) had need draw many materials from Rome, (which may done eaſily enough) with which court that of England had for the moſt part a nearer conjunction and communication of councils than any other court had: whereas it hath been the fate of our country, which hath in all ages been the field of great and noble actions in peace and in war, and hath contributed ſo much to the growth and improvement of arts and ſciences (all which are the moſt proper ſubjects of hiſtory) to have its tranſactions derived to poſterity by men, who have had no other excuſe for their preſumption but their good-will, and who hardly knew ſo much of the times in which they lived themſelves, as

the monks did of thoſe in which they lived, and from whence they drew their moſt material ingredients; which, were they not altogether untrue, are ſuch obſcure truths, ſo blindly and lamely ſet down and deſcribed, that a hiſtory compounded out of them can have very little beauty; yet in the dearth we ſuffer of the records of ancient times, they would be of great uſe to an induſtrious and a pregnant man, who, by examining other evidence and of other countries, would ſtate many things clearly, which are in thoſe authors very obſcure. I ſay, as to the compiling the beſt and moſt uſeful hiſtory, that ſpirit and thoſe faculties are neceſſary, which few but men of action and experience are poſſeſſed of; ſo the truth is, the beſt of books of any other kind, and what ſcience ſoever, have been written by men of experience and wiſdom, who have another compaſs in conſidering, and weighing, and digeſting their thoughts and conceptions, and ſelect and urge what is for their purpoſe much more pertinently, than men merely of contemplation, of how great learning ſoever, uſe to do; as any man muſt confeſs that the method of cardinal Perron, who was a man of buſineſs all his life, and of cardinal Richlieu in

what he writ of controverſy, though he was a man of much more buſineſs and much leſs ſtudy than the other, hath ſomewhat that draws more attention, and their arguments more ſubtlety and vigour, and their anſwers more rational and ſubſtantial, than we find in the writings of merely contemplative men, or of thoſe who conſult only with books, though we reckon cardinal Bellarmine himſelf of the number, who, no doubt, was a much better ſcholar, as far as being a ſcholar depends upon the reading many books, than both the other two: and we have a freſh memorial of a later cardinal, whoſe reputation of learning, ſubtlety and underſtanding, raiſed him to that degree that the ſacred college might have the aſſiſtance of a perſon of ſo rare endowments, cardinal Pallavicini; who no ſooner came into the conclave, a place where the greateſt ſagacity in diſcerning and determining is required, but he was diſcovered to be a man of wit, that could not be contended with; of fancy and invention, that could not be reſtrained or applied; and of a judgment ſo unſteady and unfixed, that when others made no objection, he overthrew it always with his own: ſo that the only uſe they made of him in all congregations was, that when any

delegates or committees were named to digeſt or prepare any buſineſs, that cardinal who deſired to obſtruct the affair, and hinder the paſſage of it, always named cardinal Pallavicini to be one of the committee; who had ſo rare a faculty in perplexing, that few could unravel what he made intricate.

There is indeed a claſſis of men, who will believe that they are maliciouſly forgotten, if they are not mentioned as a convincing inſtance and evidence and manifeſtation of the learning, and wiſdom, and rare parts of the ſpeculative and contemplative life; which is the ſchool-men: who being purely and merely men of contemplation, have illuſtrated all arts and ſciences, and have preſcribed a method of examining and judging, that men of the moſt active parts find great eaſe and improvement by the obſervation of it. I am contented that they give each what teſtimony they pleaſe, and that they aſſume the title of being *learned* and *ſubtle*, and what other title they will, but of being good for any thing. It had been happy for religion and the church of God, if they had been all bred ſhip-carpenters, or lock-ſmiths, or gun-ſmiths, or granado-mak-

ers, or any other kind of ſubtle artificers, ſo they had never been put to ſchool beyond to read and write. They are the beſt laveerers in the world, and would have taught a ſhip to have catched the wind that it ſhould have gained half in half, though it had been contrary; and would have long ſince found out the north-weſt paſſage, or a ſhorter. They would have made a key no bigger than a great pin, which would have driven five and thirty bolts and mortar-pieces, that might have carried granadoes further than a cannon can ſhoot a bullet. They might have enriched the world with many of theſe inventions both for uſe and beauty, if they had not been fatally directed to the love and contemplation of learning; of which they never undertook to handle any part that they did not deform and deface, and render unintelligible. They have corrupted and ſpoiled the nobleſt and moſt ſignificant language of the world; a language of the greateſt eloquence and greateſt clearneſs, that hath raviſhed and poſſeſſed all ears, that hath captivated the underſtanding and judgment through that avenue: and have left Latin without a monoſyllable, or one ſoft or grateful word: and inſtead thereof, have filled

the mouth ſo full of large and unweildy words, that it can hardly utter in a dialect that is intelligible, and hath made the whole maſs of the language fitter to be uſed in the Bear-garden than in places of civil converſation. I wiſh I knew, or that any body would inform me, (for I have no other diſpleaſure to them than I have to thoſe mineral men who are ſchool-men in metals, who to extract a crown's worth of ſilver, would ſpoil as much lead as would cover a houſe) what benefit the world hath received from them; what piece of learning they ever took in their hands, which they did not leave worſe than they found it; what difficulty they ever undertook to explain and reſolve, in which they did not tie more knots than there were before. They have ſtripped natural philoſophy of all its reaſon and perſpicacity, moral philoſophy of all its probity, and divinity of all its religion; by confounding all with canting terms, which are not capable of being tranſlated into any language; with diſtinctions, which ſo perplex, and alter, and cover the ſubject, that a man knows not where to find what he looks for, nor how to apply what he hath found. There is that fatal diſtemper in their brain, that when they do make

any excurſion, or ſally out of the wilderneſs of their affected words into the ſpacious and pleaſant fields of polite learning, as ſome of them ſometimes do; eſpecially St. Thomas, with as great flights in devotion as the wit of man can ſuggeſt, which from him yield infinite benefit, information and delight, ſo that a man may be ſorry that he ever kept the other company; yet in the very height of that noble career, if they come near the brink of their ſchool-learning, the precipice caſts them over head and ears into the abyſs of their profound and inſignificant definitions and diſtinctions, that a man would wonder how they come, in ſo clear a ſunſhine, ſo ſuddenly to meet with thick miſts and clouds, to cover and conceal them. I am well content that they enjoy the honour and preferment, which in the ſpacious fields of their unlimited and unreſtrained contemplation they have purchaſed for themſelves; and am glad they have had the modeſty never to contend in any field of action, but when they have been laughed off the ſtage; and it is pity but they who have gotten any conſiderable profit from them, ſhould make ample acknowlegement to their memory, though they will never be able to make amends for the

precious time that hath been caſt away upon them.

Since we have not been yet able to diſcover one inſtance of a man who hath awaked out of a dream of contemplation, and by the treaſure he brought with him from thence, hath quickly appeared a man of ſo ripe an obſervation, and ſo well qualified for the greateſt buſineſs, that he ſeemed born to teach and never to learn, we have but one other enquiry to make; which if we ſhould not do, we ſhall be thought purpoſely to decline that ſtation, that we might not meet with that crowd of inſtances as would determine the queſtion, which is the court of Rome: that conſiſting only of eccleſiaſtical perſons, whereof many have been ſaid even from their infancy to have left the world, and have lived out of it till they have been old, and have then been called again into it to the exerciſe and diſpatch of the greateſt buſineſs of the world, muſt be thought to have obtained all thoſe great endowments and advantages they have above other men, from the ſole light of contemplation; many having been called out of the dark cloyſters, in which they have ſpent their lives, to mount into the higheſt judicatory of the world, and to take

charge both of this world and the world to come. Upon which ſuggeſtion I have the leſs reaſon to enlarge, having gotten the authority of that court on my ſide; which, from their ſufferings under the government of that tribe of men, have enough provided that it ſhall never be ſo governed again, by excluding all religious men for many years out of the conclave. And though the ſame authority that hath of late provided that the popes ſhall be always choſen out of the cardinals (which hath had frequent interruption) hath likewiſe provided that there ſhall be always at leaſt four religious men in the college of the cardinals, it hath never been obſerved near theſe laſt hundred years; for moſt part of that time there hath not been one, and rarely two religious men in the whole body. Nor is there any reaſon to reproach that court with what they do not in any degree affect, with being given to a contemplation, when from boys of ſixteen they are bred the moſt to action, and the leaſt to contemplation, of any court in the world; where they leaſt look into books, and moſt converſe with men, and have nothing of eccleſiaſtical but their habit, and the firſt tonſure, which makes them capable of many preferments which

they may part with, and with their qualification, and any obligation from it, when they meet with a better invitation. But let us take a view of thoſe men, who in former ages, from very private and ſcholaſtic education, have come to great eminency of place and employment; and we ſhall then diſcover how much of their qualifications had its original from education: not to take any advantage from their pope Celeſtine, who for his ſanctity was ſent for out of his cell, and crowned pope; and for his extreme want of underſtanding and ordinary diſcretion, was within ſix weeks perſuaded to give over his place that he could not manage.

There cannot be three men named, who from the meaneſt birth and low breeding, grew to ſo great fame and luſtre, and made themſelves more illuſtrious, than our cardinal Wolſey, cardinal Ximenes in Spain, both which lived together, and Sixtus Quintus, who was afterwards pope, and who was born whilſt the other two lived. The firſt of theſe was the ſon of a poor butcher; who ſent him indeed to the univerſity, but was ſo far from being able to maintain him there, that he was compelled to leave it, and to

keep a poor ſchool in the country, which is no contemplative life, and was near thirty years of age before he was taken notice of; yet grew afterwards, by a ſucceſſion of employments, to be eſteemed of great induſtry and vivacity, which ſeldom go together; and from thence to as great a height of worldly glory, as a ſubject is capable of. But nothing of this was owing to his contemplation, but the pure effect of his activity and converſation in the greateſt courts of Chriſtendom, and with the perſons of the greateſt princes, by whom he was received into great familiarity and truſt; and if he had not been accompanied with two very great vices, from the poverty and lowneſs of his birth, the one of pride, and the other of puſilanimity, he might have been as glorious in his death as he was in his life: but an exorbitant pride grew up with him, as it is moſt natural to thoſe of the meaneſt extraction, to ſo unheard-of a degree, that he had made all the great nobility of the kingdom his mortal enemies, upon conteſts which had no relation to religion; and then his puſilanimity was in truth his death, when all the indignation of the king could not have taken his life from him; but his poor ſpirit, that had been ſo immo-

derately blown up with his proſperity, expired, at being reduced to live in a lower orb: whereas he might have raiſed a nobler monument of his virtue in his magnanimous behaviour in his misfortunes, than he hath left behind him in his palace, at Weſtminſter, and his college of Chriſt-church in Oxford.

The ſecond, who had at leaſt as obſcure an original, and in ſome reſpects made a more glorious progreſs in the world, and died of the ſame diſpirited diſeaſe, cardinal Ximenes, was the ſon of a poor ſmith, thrown into a monaſtery of Franciſcan friars, who charitably took care of his education according to the woful rules and conſtitutions of their founder. However, in a kingdom where good clothes, nor good looks, contribute nothing to advancement, he found means to make himſelf known and grateful to the greateſt prince at that tine in Europe, and of the greateſt ſagacity, and the higheſt diſſimulation, that any age hath brought out; and under this prince this friar grew to be a cardinal, and which is better, archbiſhop of Toledo, and did many the moſt magnanimous actions which can be performed by the greateſt ſubject; for, beſides the building many noble palaces, which he left to that

mighty archbiſhopric, and beſides the princely ſtructure of his college and monaſtery, which upon the matter contains the whole univerſity of Alcola; for all the public ſchools and all the profeſſors are of his foundation in his college, all the other colleges not being to be named with many of our halls; he raiſed at his own charges (to vindicate the honour of his nation, for all indignities, contumelies and calamities, it had for ſo many hundred years undergone by the Moors) an army, provided ſhips for their tranſportation, and conducted them himſelf in the expedition; invaded the neighbour part of Africa, defeated an army of the Moors, and took the city of Oran; which, with ſome other places he left and annexed to the crown of Spain, they poſſeſs to this day. This man indeed knew little more of the tranſactions of the world, than he learned in the court of his own maſter and by his inſtructions, the great Ferdinando; who, being at the age of eighteen years married to the heireſs and queen of Caſtile, was ſeldom after named without her till after her death: and indeed, the world had not a ſtage upon which more or greater buſineſs was acted, than the court of that prince; who was the founder of the Spaniſh

monarchy, left the kingdom of Naples and Sicily annexed to it, and the title to all that in Italy which hath been ſince poſſeſſed by Spain; nor was there a court in the world where the affairs of all other courts were ſo much tranſacted as in this. Under this king was this friar educated; the meanneſs of whoſe extraction cannot be concluded from the mean profeſſion of his father; for if he were an Hidalgo, (a gentleman,) as many ſmiths, and men of low profeſſions are known to be, he would not have married the daughter of the richeſt merchant in Spain. But let his birth be what it will, and his firſt ſtudies in the monaſtery be contracted and reſtrained within never ſo narrow compaſs, he lay not long buried there; nor is it probable that he addicted himſelf much to contemplation there, but had very active thoughts towards the world; for he grew quickly eminent in all the poſts through which he paſſed, from the ſchools to the pulpit, and from thence to the council, and the greateſt adminiſtrations of ſtate, under a prince that underſtood and practiſed all the good and the bad arts of government; was an excellent diſpenſer o juſtice, and a moſt devout profeſſor of religion, when he could with moſt eaſe mount by thoſe

ſtairs; and could as well make uſe of the moſt profound diſſimulation, and the moſt bare-faced perjury, when he found thoſe means contribute to his deſigns: and when he had promoted this well-inſtructed and well-exerciſed friar to be a prince of the church, and found him enough acquainted with all the ſcience of government, he committed at his death the greateſt part of the managery of it, which he conducted with unqueſtionable abilities; and if his evening had not diſcredited his works of the day, in ſinking under the diſcountenance, rather than the diſpleaſure of Charles the fifth, upon his firſt entrance into Spain; for the emperor ſent only a leſs compliment to him than he expected, which broke his heart within two days; he had remained to poſterity a laſting monument of the great abilities and virtues which naturally accompany, and are the proper fruits of an active life, but could never be applied to the advancement of a contemplative one. And how little the firſt part of his breeding in the monaſtery contributed to his rare abilities, did the more manifeſtly appear, by the perſon whom the ſame emperor, near the ſame time, cauſed to be made a cardinal, and aſſigned him to the ſame part of

the government in Spain, his tutor Adrian; who had been born of as obſcure parents, and in a worſe climate, and bred in a worſe univerſity, and by him after promoted to be pope; who remained ſtill the ſame pedant, and underſtood the world no more that he was to govern, than the reſt of his kindred that remained at Utrecht pretended to do.

The laſt of the three, and he was laſt in time, was Sixtus Quintus; of whoſe original no more is known, than that he kept pigs near a village where he was born; and might properly enough be ſaid to be promoted by chance, (though there was providence in it) when he was accidentally called to ſhew the way to another friar; who, upon conference, liking the ſpirit of the boy, commended him to the charity of a neighbour monaſtery of Franciſcans; where, by the quickneſs of his parts, and an indefatigable induſtry, in a ſhort time he made himſelf eminent in thoſe ſtudies which are taken notice of amongſt that people: but even from that time was leaſt notorious for his delight in contemplation; for he was always of a proud and imperious nature, ſollicitous for preferment, and offices which might

entitle him to govern others, without paying any obedience to thoſe ſuperiors who were to command him; and by this imperious diſpoſition he rendered himſelf very ungracious, and uneaſy to moſt of the convents in his own order; yet by his confeſſed learning and eloquence in diſputation as well as preaching, he found friends to advance him, not only to the higheſt offices of his order, as provincial and general; offices as incapable of contemplation, or as much ſtrangers to it as the greateſt conductors of armies, or the moſt active admirals upon the ocean, pretend to be; but to the degree of a cardinal, after he had been in the moſt active offices with three nuncio's in Spain, who all came afterwards to be popes, and one of which promoted him to the cardinalate. From this time it is true, and never before, he betook himſelf to a contemplative life, that is, to the contemplation how he might come to be pope; he changed entirely the whole courſe, faſhion, and manner of his life; he retired to a little houſe and good garden that he had bought, and ſeldom went out either to the court or the conſiſtory. From being rough and inſolent in converſation, he became the meekeſt and the humbleſt to all men; and from

affecting buſineſs, which he undertook very well, he withdrew himſelf from having any part in it, and took great pains to be thought utterly decayed in his intellectuals, and in truth to be thought incapable of it. So that for many years before he came to be pope, he was notorious for nothing, but for what all other men avoided to be taken notice of, that he lived not in the ſtate of a cardinal, that he underſtood nothing of their affairs, nor loved to ſpeak of them; nor was he ever mentioned for any thing that was commendable, but for his exceſs of courteſy to all men, and his cuſtomary charity, which made him beloved only among that ſort of people that could do him no good. Upon the death of Gregory XIII. when the cardinals entered into the conclave, there were many who had never ſeen Montalto, (Sixtus Quintus;) he had been much ſpoken of, ten or a dozen years before, but was now forgotten under that negligent retreat: in the conclave he ſeldom came out of his cell, except to the chappel; and then with ſo much weakneſs, that, except ſupported by ſome other help than his ſtaff, every man ſuſpected he would fall down. He could never be induced to enter into diſcourſe of the buſineſs of the conclave,

which he proteſted he underſtood not; but was full of humility to all, and offered his vote to every man who he thought probable to go out pope. After a very long and factious conclave, the two cardinals who were the heads of the contrary factions, and had ſtruggled on the behalf of their creatures to no purpoſe, met one day accidentally near the cell of cardinal Montalto, and agreed for divertiſement to make him a viſit, that is, to make themſelves merry with him. When they came in, they told him that they came to make him pope: he ſmiling, told them in a feeble voice, that if they did, they two muſt do the buſineſs, for he was ſure he would do nothing but ſay his office, and think of the way to heaven: and from this hour, both theſe cardinals, who agreed in nothing elſe, upon the preſumption that he would die in a ſhort time, and that they ſhould govern him whilſt he lived, wholly intended the making him pope, and brought it to paſs within two or three days, though no man had fewer friends, or more enemies; and in this manner he came to be Sixtus Quintus. And from that time he made it appear, that he had thought very much, too much for contemplation, and quickly undeceived thoſe who

hoped to govern him. All his faculties were renewed to their old vigour; he talked of kings and princes, as of his vaſſals, who for their miſcarriages might be queſtioned and puniſhed by him; and made it manifeſt, that he underſtood the greateſt ſecrets of their own ſeveral courts, and the greateſt intrigues in their councils; by which he exacted a greater reverence from them all than any of them had a mind to pay him. In a word, never any man more abſolutely commanded in any province, or ſuffered any man to command leſs who was under him; and if he had ever ſpent any of his time in contemplation, he made ſuch haſte to get out of it, that it was manifeſt that his whole delight was in action, and that he was never out of it but againſt his will; which naturally produces a very unequal and untoward temper for contemplation.

We have not hitherto found ſuch a definition of a contemplative life, a life addicted only to contemplation, that doth promiſe, or is like to produce ſuch fruit, as gives the moſt ſolid delight and joy to the mind or ſoul of man, or enables him to ſerve God better, or his country as well, as the more buſy and active man can do; nor

ſuch an example of a mere contemplating man, who, by his actions, hath raiſed the reputation of it to ſuch a luſtre, as may invite a man of virtue, and of public thoughts, to devote himſelf into it. But there is, I confeſs, a claſſis of men, who, I believe, are depended upon by the others to come in to their aid, though without any reaſon, being more properly called quiet than contemplative men; men, who upon a ſhort and perfunctory ſurvey of the ill humours and ill natures of mankind, it may be from ſome obſervation of want of ingenuity that attends a flood or crowd of buſineſs, or it may be from ſome ſtupidity or pride in their own natures, that renders them more unapt as well as unfit for that ſociety and converſation which an active life requires, retire quickly from the ſtage, where public buſineſſes are moſt acted, decline all ambitious pretences in the court, all deſires of public, domeſtic or foreign employments, and betake themſelves to a quiet undiſturbed condition of life in the country, in the managery of their own fortunes, or in the divertiſements of lawful ſports and recreations, or in the exerciſe of their own thoughts and domeſtic agitations; and after a great part of their life ſpent in this negligent

and neglected courſe of life, are by ſome accident or choice called out again into the world, to the diſcharge of ſome great office or employment, which they do with that wonderful ability, as if they had been always travelling in that tract; and of theſe men there are infinite examples to be found in all kingdoms and provinces. There are ſo, and will always be ſo; but they are no more applicable to the determination of this controverſy, between the excellence and benefit from a contemplative or active life, than they are towards reſolving whether a man can enjoy a better health in the court than in the country. There is no more activity in the court than there is in the country, nor more of contemplation in the country than in the court; both ſpheres are equal for the practice of both: nor is action or contemplation confined to any place, or to any quality, or degree of perſons; they may diſpoſe themſelves to which they pleaſe, and in what place they pleaſe, the queſtion being only, whether the diſpoſing themſelves to either, be like to contribute more to the ſervice of God, to the benefit of their country, and to their own ſalvation; which are the three peculiar ends of man's creation, and ought all with equal

induſtry to be intended, and no place excludes either: though it may be colleges and the country may give more natural nouriſhment to contemplation, than the court and the camp can naturally adminiſter; but towards an active life, neither of them contributes more or better materials than the country, where the beſt and the moſt exact ſurvey is taken of the nature of man, becauſe they are leaſt diſguiſed: what brings moſt and beſt advantages to the public, and what moſt contradicts or deſtroys it, is moſt effectually diſcovered; the errors in policy itſelf, though too often miſtaken, and too unſkilfully and ſuperciliouſly cenſured and reproached, are firſt taken notice of, and proper remedies foreſeen in thoſe climates. So that they who preſcribe the knowlege and converſation in courts (how uſeful ſoever) to be the only conductors towards an active life, may as reaſonably pretend that a man cannot be as good a mariner by making a voyage to the Eaſt-Indies in a merchant-ſhip, as if he had made it in a veſſel belonging to the royal navy. In a word, we are ſo far from giving up the country to the contemplative man, or for the exerciſe of contemplation, that we are ready to pronounce, that the moſt active

condition of life, as a good ſtateſman, or a good courtier, muſt draw the principal ingredients of his wiſdom from the knowlege and underſtanding of the country, which is the conſtitution of the government, and the nature and diſpoſition of the people, as it is at preſent, and as it may be brought to be by the application of thoſe arts and remedies, which will eaſily convince them what is good for themſelves, which is the true end and the only laſting ſupport of all government.

We have proſecuted our inquiſition into a contemplative life, what is meant by it, and what it cannot mean, what fruit it may bear, and what fruit it can never bear, far enough; and therefore, it is time to proceed to as ſtrict an enquiry into the nature and function of that active life that we would have preferred before it; of which we can hardly take a view, without frequent reflections upon the defects which are inſeparable from the other, and the benefits that muſt neceſſarily attend or accompany this. The firſt and the greateſt objection that is made againſt it, is the perpetual temptations it expoſes a man to, and the greateſt difficulty to preſerve

innocence in the purſuit of a buſy and ſollicitous life; that the induſtry of it is commonly founded upon ambition, which, how proud and inſolent ſoever it is in its own nature, ſtoops to the baſeſt offices, to the moſt ſordid applications of flattery, to the groſſeſt and moſt uningenuous importunities of the moſt worthleſs men, if they are able to contribute to his preferment. If activity be not tranſported with this vice, which by the way may be induſtrious and innocent too, and is naturally rather a ſpur to virtuous deſigns, than an incitation to low and vile thoughts, it is ſtill ſubſervient to ſome other as corrupt an end; it proceeds from covetouſneſs, a love of money, and deſire to be rich; which is a paſſion of that unlimited and inſatiable extent, that it devours all that is in its way, and yields to all diſhonourable condeſcenſions that it may devour, and is always unreſtrained from any preſcription of decency and generoſity, or by the moſt ſevere rules of juſtice itſelf. Should this reſtleſs inclination to action take up its habitation in a mind ſo rarely fortified by the principles of virtue, that it cannot be corrupted by thoſe predominant paſſions which work upon vulgar conſtitutions; whoſe ambition is to be

great for no other reaſon, than that he may be able to make other men good, and to ſuppreſs the infectious vices of the age; who hath no other appetite of money, than that he may diſpoſe it to charitable and generous purpoſes; it will ſtill be liable, even from the contagion of company from which it cannot be ſevered, to impreſſions of vanity and levity and incogitancy, which uſher the way to other temptations, at leaſt introduces an inquietude into a mind well prepared againſt more violent invaſions. And if a man under all theſe aſſaults, and in all theſe conflicts, remains unhurt, retains the vigour and beauty of his integrity, which will be no leſs than a miraculous preſervation in this purſuit; it is yet much more than an even wager, that the very frame and reputation of his virtue and innocence may raiſe ſuch a ſtorm of envy and malice in the breaſts of unrighteous men, as may oppreſs him in the nobleſt attempt, and utterly deſtroy him in the ſafeſt port, and leave his good name and memory torn with as many ghaſtly wounds, as his body or his fortune: to which ſhall be only added, that hiſtory or experience hath tranſmitted the memory of very few men to us, who have been notoriouſly pro-

ſperous in the tranſactions of the world, and long poſſeſſed that ſtation, whoſe characters have not retained the mention of ſome extraordinary vice or infirmity, as well as of many notable virtues; as if thoſe ſtrong flights could not be made without the aſſiſtance of ſome iniquity. Whereas the contemplative life is ſecure from all theſe or the like waves and billows; that retreat enjoys a perpetual calm; the contemplative man is never diſturbed with ambition, becauſe he knows not what it is, otherwiſe than in books, which hath ſupplied him with antidotes againſt that poiſon; he is ſuperior to any temptation from the love of money, becauſe he needs it not, nor knows what to do with it if he had it: he hath in the dark volumes of philoſophers made a diſcovery of that heap of paſſions and appetites, which lie in wait to aſſault human nature in all the ſeveral functions of human life and inſults of fortune; and when he diſcerns the ſtrong oppoſition made, and the glorious conqueſts obtained by thoſe heathen philoſophers, by the meer ſupplies which reaſon and their natural faculties ſuggeſted to them, he then conſiders what other advantages he hath from Chriſtianity, which enables him at once to deſpiſe and laugh at the

provocations, without any exaltation in the triumph.

Let this privation of underſtanding go for wiſdom, and this ſtupid abſence of guilt ſtand for uprightneſs, yet it complies not with the obligation and end of the creation of man; who is not ſent into the world only to have a being, to breathe till natnre extinguiſheth that breath, and reduceth that miſerable creature to the nothing he was before: he is ſent upon an errand, and to do the buſineſs of life; he hath faculties given him to judge between good and evil, to cheriſh and foment the firſt motions he feels towards the one, and to ſubdue the firſt temptations to the other; he hath not acted his part in doing no harm; his duty is not only to do good and to be innocent himſelf, but to propagate virtue, and to make others better than they would otherwiſe be. Indeed, an abſence of folly is the firſt hopeful prologue towards the obtaining wiſdom; yet he ſhall never be wiſe who knows not what folly is, nor, it may be, commendably and judiciouſly honeſt, without having taken ſome view of the quarters of iniquity: ſince true virtue pre-ſuppoſeth an election, a declining ſome-

what that is ill, as well as the choice of what is good. Our ſenſes are given us to judge by, and have their proper objects, which they are the ſole judges of; nor is it lawful to impriſon thoſe ſenſes, that they may not be converſant with their objects, nor to abate their edge, and extinguiſh the acuteneſs, which is the perfection of them, leſt their objects, how natural and proper ſoever, may have ſome operation upon them to their prejudice: a man may hear too much, and ſee more than he hath a mind to ſee; but no man ever ſaw too well, or heard too well; and no ſenſe was ever reformed by being deprived of its object, from the malignity whereof he hath other guards and remedies to ſecure him. A man would deſerve little comfort in this world, or in the world that is to come, who would chuſe to be blind, that he may be without thoſe ſtrugglings which ſome beautiful objects may raiſe or kindle within him; when a chaſte eye hath a brightneſs about it, that diſpels and diſperſes thoſe rays which would dazzle and perplex it: and the unnatural attempt to extinguiſh a ſenſe or paſſion, rather than to ſubdue it, is uſually rewarded by the prevalence of a groſſer temptation; and the laſciviouſneſs that could not get

entrance at the eye, makes a breach into the ear in looſe and effeminate tunes, and kindles and fans all thoſe deſires into a flame, that the noble ſenſe would have reſiſted. To be without wiſhes, or without appetite, is the property of a carcaſe, not of a man; who is not a more reaſonable, than an active creature; whoſe firſt teſtimony that he hath a ſoul, is the noiſe he makes; and there cannot be a worſe omen in the birth of any child, than its ſilence; and it were to be wiſhed, that thoſe inſtances only might condemn people to a contemplative life, into which ſilence is the principal ingredient, and ſhould be taken for the beſt prognoſtic. The world is a field, in which man is to learn and to labour to be wiſe and to be valiant, that he may have foreſight and courage enough to encounter and ſubdue temptations, not to hope to fly from them; at leaſt not to fly out of the field, or farther than to recover breath to renew and continue the contention: they who preſcribe famine to correct the luxury of the appetite, and opening all the veins of the body to ſubdue the luſts of the fleſh, have found a remedy that God never thought of, and for the cure whereof nature hath laid in a ſtock of temperance and moderati-

on, if it be carefully applied. It is a vulgar error, and is moſt produced and nouriſhed in vulgar minds, that a man cannot ſhut himſelf up from approaching any vice, or ſhut out any vice from approaching him, except he ſhut himſelf up in the grave; that ſtruggle and contention muſt laſt as long as the world laſts, let the ſcene ly where it will; and he who baſely declines the campaign, that he may ly concealed in a garriſon town, meets with the ſame or greater dangers from the ſickneſs, diſeaſe, and mutinies, which naturally accompany thoſe retreats, than he would have encountered in the thickeſt vollies of the field; and may proper enough be compared to that wary people, who, conſcious to themſelves of that want of courage and reſolution that is neceſſary to reſiſt the devil, and to make him fly from them, chuſe rather to fly from him, and hide themſelves in monaſteries and places of ſolitude; and make vows of ſilence, that he may take no advantage of their words; and that they may be chaſte, beſides their vows, avoid the company of all women; and vow poverty, that they may be without ambition: whereas the devil is commonly too hard for them in thoſe dull ſpeculations, and ſuggeſts thoughts to them as

full of wickedneſs, as the worſt actions can be; and infuſes a drouzineſs and ſottiſhneſs into their ſouls, a ſtupidity and lethargy into their underſtandings, that is more dangerous and pernicious to their bodies and their ſouls, than all their wanderings in the world could probably have proved.

The buſy and induſtrious man hath ſtill the light about him, his vices and his virtues are equally conſpicuous; and it is no ſmall or ineffectual provocation to the amendment of life, to find that his manners are taken notice of by all men, and condemned by moſt; which is a wholſome mortification: his wiſdom and piety make a greater and a better noiſe, and ſhine brightly in the view and to the benefit and information of good men, who delight to dreſs themſelves in his glaſs, and tranſcribe his manners into their own. He doth not only plant and cultivate the principles of induſtry, magnanimity, and all heroical virtues in the minds of men, but mends and improves the ſoil where they ſhould grow, by gentle and civil cautions and animadverſions; and he very often lives to ſee the harveſt and very good fruits gathered from his huſbandry, to the

benefit of the church and ſtate. He reads lectures, and gets children after he is dead by the propagation of his principles and his counſels, and the communication of his actions, and in the juſtice that is paid to his memory. If theſe flowers grow in the garden of contemplation, they are of the nature of thoſe flowers which proſper only in the night, and diſappear and cloſe their leaves at the riſing of the ſun. We have very little teſtimony, very few records, of any notable fruit gathered from this dry tree of ſolitude; that their counſels have contributed much to that wiſdom, which is neceſſary for the virtuous conduct of the affairs of this world; and the ſpeculations which ſome of thoſe pious men have produced towards our journey to the next, a wiſe preparation for which is the moſt neceſſary buſineſs of this life; without the leaſt purpoſe to undervalue the pains they have taken, and for which they deſerve great thanks, we may ſay, that even in that exerciſe, and to the purpoſes they deſign, the preſcriptions for living well and profitably for ourſelves and others, and of dying well for our own ſalvation and the example of others, the clear reſolutions of weighty doubts, and the folly of thoſe doubts which

ariſe from the impotence of the underſtanding; the advice and determinations which we have received from the piety and induſtry of thoſe who have been very converſant in the world, and much intangled in the affairs and tranſactions thereof, have another kind of ſap and nouriſhment, carry in them another kind of conviction of the underſtanding, and find another kind of irreſiſtibleneſs from the affections and from the will, than the laboured conceptions of thoſe collegiate and monaſtic perſons; from whom we may as reaſonably expect to receive the news of the court, as the moſt refined notions of any ſcience; which can only ſpring, as to uſe and application, from frequent experience and ſolid obſervation, and from finding ourſelves often deceived; which is a part of learning the other claſſis of men are very rarely verſed in.

It cannot be denied, that they who are imbarked in the agitations of the world, obliged to be preſent in the throngs and crowds of courts, to ſuſtain the burdens of great offices and employments, or the envy and murmurs of being without them, or ſeeing other men poſſeſſed of them, who they think are in merit inferior to

themſelves; which make them complain of the juſtice of princes, and of the providence of God himſelf: I ſay, theſe men, and all who would be in the rank of theſe men, who have a wider proſpect of good and evil, ſee the pleaſant baits and temptations, and the groſſer traps and gins that are laid to catch and ſurprize the ſeveral affections and appetites of idle and diſſolute men; and therefore probably more of them may be ſeized upon and corrupted by ſuch allurements, than can be debauched in cloiſters and incloſures, which are without ſuch proſpects. But it is a very great error to conclude from hence, that this exorbitancy in the inclinations, this depravedneſs of their judgment, or corruption of their manners with what vice ſoever, is the product of that courſe of life which they have addicted themſelves to: whereas the courſe of life they have choſen is innocent and honourable, and only can be effectually proſecuted by excellent, at leaſt well qualified perſons; and the vices which commonly firſt or laſt make them unſucceſsful in it, proceed from the corruption and wickedneſs in their own nature, and which would break out with equal venom in any condition of life or in any profeſſion; the malignity is in the man,

brought with him, not found by him in the air in which he lives. He who is of licentious manners in a court, would, with leſs cleanlineſs, practiſe the like, or as bad exceſſes in a convent; and he who is corrupt upon the bench, and receives bribes in caſes of judicatory, would be as diſhoneſt if he were a friar: he would corrupt women in his chair of confeſſion; and give abſolution in the greateſt crimes, that he might be inſtructed in the moſt ſecret practices and myſteries of iniquity: if he be a great man, and inclined to rebellion, had he been a monk, he would have become an heretic, and diſturbed the peace of his country with thoſe uproars. And on the other ſide, that poor Capuchin, who without ſhoes or ſhirt, and upon leſs meat than nature and health requires for its ſuſtentation, contracts and directs all his thoughts to the glory of God, and to the enquiry into the joys of heaven; and in a converſation ſo remote from underſtanding, and in quarters ſo ſterile and barren of all knowlege, can perceive any moderate vigour of ſpirit by variety of his own devotions; this man, upon being in better company, and his obſervation of the thoughts and actions of men, and his diſcovery of the vaſt diſtance that is uſually between

them, would arrive at ſuch a piercing faculty, that no enormous ſin ſhould find a lurking place in the darkeſt breaſt, to conceal itſelf from him: he would poſſeſs himſelf of the hearts of princes, by the force and violence of his attractive reaſon and virtue, and would raiſe ſuch monuments and erect ſuch land-marks for piety and devotion, that would convince and reform the world together. So great a difference there is between the influence and inſpiration of the ſun in that ſphere where it moves ſo powerfully upon noble and active employments, and the twinkling light of the moon-ſhine that hath a faint influence upon groves and cloiſters.

It is time now to drive this diſcourſe to that point, that can only put an end to it; the true and exact conſideration of God's purpoſe and expectation from and in his creation of man, as far as he hath communicated it to us himſelf; which may be, and uſually is, reduced to three ſhort heads, though either of them may be extended into great variety of reflections. (1.) For his own ſervice. (2.) For the benefit of the world and good of mankind. (3.) For the ſalvation of our own ſouls; which is rather our

duty from our creation, than the cauſe of it; and both the laſt depend upon the well diſcharging the firſt obligation. And from the view of every one of them in order, we ſhall be beſt able to judge which condition and deſignation of our lives is moſt like to comply with his purpoſe and expectation, and to enable us to bear that fruit that is neceſſary with reference to all the particulars. To begin then with what relates to God's ſervice; and a man may as reaſonably believe that he can dreſs himſelf as well in the night as in the day, when it is dark as when it is light; as that he can be enabled to do it as well without counſel and without converſation, as by the moſt pious motives and the brighteſt examples that can be given by the uprighteſt and moſt devout man. There is no priſon ſo ſtreight and narrow, in which the pooreſt man may not ſerve God very effectually, and it may be the more effectually, from the miſery of his reſtrain: but he that would chuſe to be caſt, or caſt himſelf into a loathſome priſon, upon the preſumption that he would ſerve God there with more fervour, would very probably think leaſt of him, and ſpend his time more in murmurs than in ſighs. Too many, who know enough of him, endeavour little

to pleaſe him, and were more happy if they knew leſs; yet there is no queſtion, that he who knows moſt of him, knows beſt how to ſerve him, and is moſt inexcuſable if he doth not. He who in the great variety of ſpectacles, and of the ſeveral actions and deſigns of men of all tempers and inclinations, cannot but more obſerve the footſteps of God's providence, and the contradictions of that providence by wilful and affected tergiverſations, muſt conſequently know his own duty better than the poor artificer, who is confined to his proper work that he may get bread, and is without thoſe viſions, and could not make the ſame obſervations if he had them; nor can it be more doubted, that God expects another kind of account from the firſt than from the laſt. The man who is well inſtructed by his experience, and the improvement of his faculties, doth not only know better how to comply with his own obligations in doing all things that may pleaſe him, how uneaſy ſoever it is to him, and in declining all things that will diſpleaſe him, how pleaſant and grateful ſoever thoſe particulars would have been to his own deſires and affections; but knows likewiſe that God hath communicated that knowlege, and encreaſed that under-

ſtanding, that he may inſtruct and reform other men, who are without thoſe immediate aſſiſtances; that he hath given him a cure of ſouls, a dioceſe to govern: and all the good operations which his informations and example hath upon the manners and the lives of other men, are ſo many ſervices to God himſelf, a regiment or an army raiſed at his own particular charge for the heavenly militia. It is no eaſy thing to conceive what contribution of this kind your retired men can bring in for his ſervice: they pretend not to inſtruct others, whoſe company and converſation they chuſe to abjure or avoid; and after a ſhort ſolitude, grow to that ſottiſhneſs of underſtanding, as to make an acquaintance with birds and beaſts, and to affect their company till they have taught them to perform many offices of life, and it is well if they eſcape the working of miracles. It is true, they aſſume to themſelves, or others attribute to them, a wonderful prerogative of prayer; the importunity and merit whereof, they would have it believed, doth contribute to the ſalvation of many active ſouls, which bear a little part towards it for themſelves: whereas it will require ſome charity to believe, that they underſtand enough of the nature of

prayer, or of the very exiſtence of God himſelf, to make their devotions prevalent for their own ſalvation; ſince there are as many difficulties to be overcome towards the right ſervice of God, and as many knots to be untied in the knowlege of him, as in any other ſcience; which rude and unpoliſhed underſtandings cannot comprehend; and it is an unpardonable preſumption, not to call it worſe, to imagine that the prayers of thoſe who pretend to no other merit, than by denying to do ſomewhat that God gave them leave, and made it lawful for them to have done, ſhould have force to draw down more bleſſings from heaven than will ſerve their own turn. Many, very many inſtances are not wanting of extraordinary men, who, ſatiated with the tranſactions of the world, have withdrawn themſelves from the ſtage of action, to a quiet and induſtrious retirement; in which, by reflections upon what they have ſeen and done, the wonderful ſucceſſes which could not be foreſeen, and the greateſt misfortunes that could not be prevented, they have raiſed ſuch inſtructions for the attaining all kind of wiſdom, that, if induſtry and advertency be not wanting, the journey is much ſhortened that leads to all degrees of hap-

pineſs, by their travels, to all that follow them: but we are yet to ſeek for any one notable example of a man, who having ſpent the firſt part of his life in ſolitude, and hath no other knowlege of God, of himſelf, and of other men, than he hath drawn out of the bowels of his own ſpeculations; and hath after, upon or from that drowſy contemplation, raiſed a ſtock of diſcretion and ability to enter upon the government and conduct of any public affairs, upon what exigent ſoever he be called thereunto, with any tolerable advantage. When the pope found it neceſſary to command the duke of Joyeuſe, for the glory of God, to put off the habit of a Capuchin; and commanded him, under the penalty of ſin, to undertake the conduct of a rebellious army againſt his own natural king, and abſolved or diſpenſed with all thoſe oaths and vows which he had made, and which were firſt to be removed; the poor Capuchin became not thereby ſo inſpired in the art of war, though the holy father ſent him a ſword of his own bleſſing for the furer execution, as to obtain any victory upon his enemies: but gave occaſion to Henry the fourth to obſerve, that the pope had ſpoiled a good Capuchin, to make the worſt general in the

world. When thoſe vigorous ſpirits are firſt mortified and moped with the abſurd documents of contemplation, before they know any thing to contemplate upon, they can never be revived out of that dull and lazy lethargy, to be applied to any magnanimous activity.

The next conſideration is, for the benefit of the world, and good of mankind: in which the diſquiſition will be extended little farther, than whether a man who lives in the world is able to confer more and greater benefits upon it, than he who lives out of it; whether he who converſes freely amongſt men be more like to do them good, to inſtruct and inform them what they are to do, than he who converſes ſolely amongſt walls and trees. What reverend eſteem ſoever we are bound to have of the wonderful creation of the whole world, and of the moſt excellent part of that creation, in the beauty and glory of man, both in body and ſoul; yet we are no more obliged to believe that he created man with all that ſharpneſs of underſtanding, and faculties of judging, with which he hath ſince endued him, than we are to think that the garden of Eden was cultivated with as much curioſity, as

any hath been ſince in Italy or France: if Adam were ſo qualified, he quickly loſt it; and we have as old records of the folly of mankind, as of their wickedneſs; and the greateſt part of the world is yet inhabited by men as ſavage as the beaſts who inhabit with them; and there is no nation that hath not elder records of their barbarity, than of the knowlege and manners with which they are now delighted. As God created man out of the earth, ſo he committed the earth to man, to be by him cultivated and poliſhed, and made fitter for his reſidence; and though he did ſometimes, and for ſome extraordinary adminiſtration of his ſervice, vouchſafe to inſtruct ſome particular men, and to enlighten their underſtanding by his own inſpiration, this was but rarely, and to ſome wonderful purpoſe. The common method he uſed was, to leave mankind to proſecute their own happineſs, and to attain to it by their mutual induſtry, and improving each others faculties; and they who therein made the greateſt progreſs by the very dictates of nature, received the eſteem and reverence of thoſe who have groſſer underſtandings. God hath done his part when he hath made us capable of helping ourſelves, and infuſing reaſon into

us to repair to others, when we cannot help ourſelves; and to what nation ſoever he hath been moſt bountiful in the communication of his graces, there are even there many more to learn than there are to teach. So that learning and knowlege which produces wiſdom, is the natural effect of mens induſtry, and men are indebted to each other for all the advantages they have over each other; and they deſerve much more from mankind, who by their care and kindneſs conduct them to be wiſe, than they do who build hoſpitals for fools. No charity is comparable to the charity of inſtruction and of ſeaſonable reprehenſion, and none can diſtribute this charity but wiſe men; and every man, how wealthy ſoever, is a proper object of this charity. If a man will be ſo perverſe, as to deſpiſe and hate inſtruction, and chuſe rather to give himſelf up to the torrent of his own appetite, than to the conduct of his own reaſon, or the precepts of an honeſt man, he is diverted or reduced by the power and authority of the magiſtrate; ſo that man is ſtill the inſtrument that adminiſters information, conſolation or chaſtiſement to other men, whereby they are either made wiſe, preſerved innocent, or corrected for not being ſo;

and whoſoever doth exerciſe thoſe functions effectually, doth God and his king and his country great ſervice; and they who can do neither, muſt be thought to live to leſs purpoſe and to deſerve leſs regard. Before heaven or hell were preached or thought of, lazy and unactive men were in contempt with all men; and they who were buſy and induſtrious, and thereby brought fruit into the world, had the general applauſe and eſtimation; and we may warrantably believe, that idolatry was firſt brought into the world by the diſtinctions of mens qualities and virtues, when men of tranſcendent parts, and who delighted in doing good, got the reputation of deities, and ſhortly after their death became adored as ſuch: when the ordinary and common ſort of men were conſidered but as brutes, and lived to as little purpoſe. All that is pleaſant, and beautiful, and uſeful upon earth, the cities and gardens, the palaces and churches, which are the ornaments of the earth, and exceeded only by God's own architecture in heaven, are from the bounty and contrivance, and upon the matter from the very handy-work of great and magnanimous perſons, who underſtood and were active in the affairs and tranſactions of the world,

and acted their parts in them; and to that ſpirit only, and to God's bleſſing, which is always upon it, and cheriſhes and directs it, we owe our dwelling in houſes, our living cleanly, our being clothed, and the civility of our manners, which diſtinguiſhes us from the naked painted bodies and the rude behaviour of our anceſtors, with rings and ſuch coarſe ornaments for their ears, cheeks and noſes; and whoever doth not think that religion itſelf hath received great benefit from thoſe cultivations and by the improvement of all ſciences, and that it hath been thereby redeemed from many deformities and impurities, with which by the unpoliſhed manners of the profeſſors of it, it was disfigured and diſcredited, doth more dote upon the wrinkled face of antiquity than he hath cauſe to do; and if antiquity itſelf be in truth ſo inſtructive and lovely, it will be much more knowing and more amiable in the laſt ſcene, judge better in the evening, when one day hath told another, and one night hath certified another of all that it hath ſeen or heard, than they who ſcarce outlived the morning; and by this computation we may be thought older than our forefathers, and having obſerved more, may contribute ſomewhat

to that they could not know ſo well: and to this augmentation your tribe of contemplative men can bring in little contribution.

We are come now to the laſt ſurvey; what condition of life is like beſt to aſſiſt us towards the attaining our own ſalvation; which is our firſt and our laſt work, and which if we cannot obtain, it had been much better for us we had never been born. God forbid, that every honeſt man, how unactive ſoever, who means well, and is no otherwiſe guilty than of not being able to do all the good he deſires to do, ſhould not be in a ſtate and aſſured hope of ſalvation; yet ſalvation being comprehended within a palace of the nobleſt and the largeſt extent that the imagination of man can conceive, and where there is room for as many as ſhall be admitted, we may lawfully believe, as the whole Chriſtian church did for the ſpace of fifteen hundred years, though ſome learned men have ſince diſclaimed that opinion, that there are ſeveral degrees of happineſs in that ſituation of beatitude: and then it is more than probable, that they who have been more ſignal and more ſucceſsful in doing well themſelves, and in perſuading and inſtructing

others to do ſo too, ſhall receive greater rewards, than they who only performed their own taſk, though they have thereby procured a reception for themſelves. If there be in that houſe of eternity many manſions, it is but congruous to believe that they ſhall have the beſt places in heaven, who have been the beſt men upon earth, and whoſe precepts and examples have ſent and carried moſt ſouls thither. It is true, we know little of the ſtate and condition of angels and ſaints, and too much reaſon to imagine that too many have miſtaken their way thither, who have procured ſome teſtimony that they are there; yet we know that there are arch-angels, who are of a claſſis ſuperior to the other, and have employments and truſts committed to them accordingly. The prayers of a devout general while upon his knees, and when his army is fighting, may procure victory for that army, without his contributing more to it; yet becauſe men pray and fight together, princes have rarely rewarded, at leaſt not equally, the piety of ſuch a general, as they have done the courage of inferior officers: and we may lawfully believe, without doing ourſelves any harm, or him any diſhonour, that God doth obſerve that method. There is a ri-

valſhip in virtue, that provokes a holy ambition; and it would do leſs miſchief in the world, if men were generally taught to believe, that the moſt vehement purſuit of obedience to all God's commandments, and the prevailing upon the affections of other men to do the ſame, doth not improve the ſtate of that man above his, who hath only forborn maliciouſly to tranſgreſs any of them, than the too common opinion, that whatſoever a man doth or leaves undone, his lot will ſtill fall out to be the ſame. Kings and princes, as ſuch, can make no claim of precedence in heaven; nay, they are in danger of having many ſins of commiſſion and omiſſion laid to their charges, which ſhall not be objected to inferior delinquents: yet good kings and princes, who have expelled and baniſhed all uncleanneſs and profaneneſs out of their courts, and thereby prepared the hearts of their ſervants for the reception of that awe and reverence for God almighty, that will make them tremble to offend him; who govern their ſubjects with that candour and affection, as they do their children; and with that fatherly rigour, that compels them to do their duties, when they have no mind to be innocent; ſuch princes and great men ſhall have

a precedence in heaven itſelf: and it is a joy worthy of that region, to ſee a train ſent thither by their directions, or come thither by following their example; and it will well become perſons of that exalted condition, to prepare ſuch an equipage for their laſt journey, both for their harbingers and retinue, by which they would travel at leſs charge, and enjoy reſt with more eaſe. There cannot be a worſe character given of an emperor, or of a gentleman, than Tacitus gives of Galba, *Ipſi medium ingenium, magis extra vitia, quam cum virtutibus:* he ſcarce lives a ſenſitive life, (for trees naturally grow and improve themſelves, and bring benefit to their owners, plants flouriſh, and ſeeds produce profit to them that ſow them) who only lives, and doth no good; and he is not ſo rational as he ought to be, that ſo lives to himſelf, and for himſelf, that he labours not to do good to others. I am not ſure that the ſon of Syrach was not then thinking of our ſullen contemplative man, when he ſays, *There is one that laboureth and taketh pains, and maketh haſte, and is ſo much the more behind.* It is not the pains a man takes, but the ſkill he hath in doing the work, which merits the wages. Mere labourers earn

little; and a blind man who is ſhut up in a great room, may take great pains, and labour himſelf to wearineſs, and yet not be able to find the door.

They who ſeem to believe that all ſouls are alike; that the ſoul in the wiſeſt man and in the greateſt ſcholar is no more diſpoſed to wiſdom and learning, than the ſoul that is infuſed into a fool and the moſt illiterate perſon; do yet confeſs, that it is poliſhed by education and converſation, to that perfection, that it produces thoſe effects which diſtinguiſh the wiſe from the fooliſh, and makes all other diſtinctions between the ſeveral faculties of mankind; which is enough to oblige us to give ſo precious an inmate and companion, that can make us ſo good a recompenſe, the beſt entertainment we can; to allow it the beſt diet, and preſcribe it the beſt exerciſe, that may nouriſh it to that vigour, as may make us gracious to God and man. Whether its virtue proceeds from its own original, or whether it be purely from our contribution, it is the ſame to us; for what perfection is in our own power to attain unto, is a debt due to ourſelves, which we are in conſcience bound to pay; and he who

will not do all he can to make himſelf wiſe, highly deſerves to undergo the fortune and the fate of a fool; and he is literally *ſelo de ſe*, who deprives and robs himſelf of that which no body but himſelf can rob him of; nor need he require any other evidence than his own, to know whether he hath paid his debt, whether he hath done all to mend this ſoul of his that he ought to have done. If he finds ſome inclinations in it to do well, or no importunities or averſions from it; and knows that no induſtry, cogitation, or reflection of his hath contributed to thoſe motions; he may conclude, that it is not a ſoul of his own making, but that it owes all its virtues to its own original, and would have had as much influence upon a ſilly girl, as it hath had upon him: but if he finds that, upon his deliberation and application, it hath recovered more ſtrength and vigour; that upon his cogitations and reflections, it is not only ready to give an aſſent, but ſuggeſts new conceptions to him to advance any noble deſigns; he may then conclude, that it is in his own power to extend it farther; and that by a good diet, and proper exerciſe, it may be inſtrumental to bring notable things to paſs, for the ſervice of God, for the good of his coun-

try, and for his own and the ſalvation of other men. The wiſdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leiſure. That is true; when there is wiſdom and learning, they will both grow, and be improved by the opportunity of leiſure; but neither wiſdom nor learning will be ever got by doing nothing. He that hath little buſineſs ſhall become wiſe, but he that hath none, ſhall remain a fool; he that doth not think at all upon what he is to do, will never do any thing well; and he who doth nothing but think, had as good do nothing at all. The mind that is unexerciſed, that takes not the air, that it may know the minds of other men, contracts the ſame aches and cramps in the faculties of the underſtanding that the body labours with by the want of exerciſing its limbs; and he that reſolves to ſit ſtill, can never come to the other end of his journey by other men's running never ſo faſt. There is evidence, by the obſervation and experience of every man, enough to convince him of the great advantages which attend upon an active life, above what waits upon pure contemplation; that there is a great difference between the abilities of that man who hath contracted himſelf to any one ſtudy, though he

excels in it, and him who hath with much leſs labour attained to a general experimental knowlege of things and perſons; and ſo the greateſt divine who hath read all the ſchool men, and all the fathers, and is as wiſe as moſt of them were, will be ſooner deceived in the market, and pay more for his clothes and for his meat, than his groom will do, who underſtands that and his horſe too. A good proportion of univerſal knowlege is requiſite to judge of that which ſeems to be moſt particular, eſpecially if it refers to any thing that is to be done, becauſe men ought to foreſee and provide againſt all things which may poſſibly croſs the enterprize, as well as prepare all things which may probably make it ſucceed. Very great attempts, and very well deliberated, have miſcarried and been diſappointed, by the incompetency of the perſons to act thoſe parts to which they were aſſigned; and who undertook the ſame willingly, becauſe they believed themſelves to be very competent for the execution. And ſo Machiavel obſerves, it was an abſurd inadvertency in thoſe who conſpired the aſſaſſination of Julius and Lorenzo de Medicis, in the church, preſuming that they would come and ſit together, and provided three men

very equal in the undertaking; two of them being gentlemen of known valour and reſolution, and of implacable malice to the perſons and to the family of the Medicis, and the third a prieſt of great ſtrength, and wickedneſs enough to undertake, and courage to execute what he undertook: but the two brothers not coming together, and the article of time for the execution being agreed upon to be in the moment of the elevation, the conſpirators were compelled to divide the work, and to deſign the prieſt to diſpatch Lorenzo, who was firſt come, and ſat near the altar in a crowd of perſons of honour, without the leaſt apprehenſion of danger, and committed the ſlaughter of the other to the two reſolute perſons. Julius came late to the church, and was in the embraces of the one, when he was ſtruck to the heart with a dagger by the other; whereby all three falling together, and multiplying their ſtrokes, not knowing that there was enough done before, one of them ſtruck his dagger through his own thigh; and yet by the confuſion and conſternation the people were in, they both got out of the church, and left Julius dead upon the place. The prieſt was no leſs intent upon his work, nor leſs reſolved to perform it,

and in the preciſe minute of that holy exerciſe, aſſaulted Lorenzo with his undiſcerned and unſuſpected dagger, and ſtruck him into the throat; but though he reiterated his ſtrokes, either by the poſture that he himſelf or the other was in, or by not directing his blows to the moſt mortal places, Lorenzo made ſome defence with his hands, and after with his ſword, till with the help of others he got into the ſacreſty, and barricadoed the door, till he found that the conſpirators were employed rather to ſave their own lives, than to proſecute his; and ſo he retired to his houſe to take care of his wounds. Machiavel obſerves, that the miſcarriage of this enterprize, was the effect of the unaptneſs of the prieſt to be relied upon in ſuch an affair; for though he was expert enough in many other ſorts of villany, he had not been often enough converſant in aſſaſſination, and ſo was more diſturbed or diſcompoſed in the execution of it, than an expert man would have been. Without doubt, all counſels, good or bad, do depend for the purſuance thereof upon ſo many circumſtances, that there ought to be at leaſt as much circumſpection in the choice of proper inſtruments to conduct them, as in all the other deliberations.

Having now proſecuted this ſubject at leaſt far enough, and, it may be, ſaid ſome things over and over; and that I may not be thought an enemy to contemplation, without which no great action was ever well and warrantably performed; I am willing to find a claſſis of men, whoſe virtues grow out of, and conſequently may be divided between the active and the contemplative life, and ſo give great perfection to both. My exception only is againſt thoſe, who fancy that a mind utterly uninformed and unexperienced, ſhall, by being dedicated to retirement and privacy, by that repoſe and contemplation, not only preſerve a greater innocence, but attain to a greater perfection for the performance of thoſe duties which are incumbent upon us. Which I muſt always deny; and cannot conceive that thinking to any purpoſe is a fruit that grows out of ſolitude, but rather that it may be well called a faculty that is attained with great difficulty; and the want of which is the fountain and ſource from whence the moſt, if not the greateſt inconveniencies flow in the actions of mankind; which methinks ſhould appear very credible upon the obſervation of all men who

hear the excuſes that are every day made, and truly made, by thoſe who do amiſs, that they did not think of it; and it is a real diſeaſe that infeſts the bodies, and ruins the eſtates of more men than all the fevers which uſually reign: and yet that kind of thinking, though it might prevent many of thoſe follies which happen, would not be enough to conſtitute that wiſdom of which we are diſcourſing. The wiſe man that ſhould reform and eſtabliſh governments, without expoſing them to apparent hazards and dangers, who would at the ſame time have an influence upon the ſpirits of princes, and compoſe the minds of the people, and produce a conformity in the obedience of the one to the wiſhes of the other, and bring all ſuch other things to paſs, from whence men come to be reputed wiſe and fortunate, muſt compound his life both out of action and contemplation; and they muſt as it were ſucceed each other, *alternis vicibus*. If a man who hath been well verſed in the conduct of affairs, and the nature of men, would voluntarily quit the ſtage, and retire to a condition of chearful contemplation; and if he who hath converſed with few but with himſelf, or with others at that diſtance, that he may be ſaid rather

to know their names than the men, but is abundantly ſtocked with the beſt obſervations out of the beſt books, would retire from his retirement, and firſt make himſelf acquainted with men, and then with buſineſs by degrees; for there may be more poured in together than the veſſel can receive and retain, which all men find who do not come *gradatim*, but *per ſaltum*, to employment; either of ſuch men would be fit to ſtand in a breach that threatens the ruin of a nation; would ſtand upon a precipice without ſtirring, and by his convincing reaſons ſubdue the paſſions, and reform the irregularities of the moſt forward and inſolent perſons, when from ſuch a receſs, and after ſuch an advance, they return to their former ſtation. But, as I ſaid before, this muſt be a voluntary receſs, that may carry with it that ſerenity of mind, that is fit to revolve all he hath done, and all that he hath ſeen done; and thereupon made ſome reflections impartially, that he may diſcern where the faults or overſights were, and thereby conclude what may with more diſcretion be done, or left undone upon the like occaſion. If this receſs be conſtrained by the envy and power of an adverſary, and ſo the man be looked upon as under a diſgrace,

and compelled to do that which he could not avoid the doing of, it will be a very difficult thing to preſerve that tranquillity of mind which is neceſſary to the integrity of ſuch cogitations and reflections: but he will rather call to mind the faults of other men than his own; and out of prejudice to the perſons of others, not remember what he did amiſs himſelf: or if he be not ſo much oppreſſed with the mortification, but that he doth with ingenuity recollect his own errors, and think no worſe of others than he ought to do; yet the effect it uſually produces is rather a diſinclination, an abhorrence of future activity, and a reſolution never more to imbark himſelf in any employment, to which the diſobligations and indignities which are ſeldom wanting in thoſe ſeaſons to ſuch perſons, contribute very much. Whereas if this vacation be really choſen and affected, it carries with it a wonderful refreſhment of the mind, and is ſo far from raiſing an averſion to the former courſe of life, that it is more like to whet the appetite; and the imagination and conſcience of being wiſer than he was before, and not liable to thoſe paſſions which he hath ſubdued, may even provoke him to be very willing to ſubmit his neck to the ſame

yoke; and having ſtill preſerved his reputation, other men are more glad after ſome years abſence to ſee him tread the ſtage again, and have more reverence for his dictates, than they would have for a new comer, exalted from being inferior, it may be from being their enemy, to the ſame condition with them.

The reaſon why we have in an age ſo few examples of the improvement of men by that method, I mean in monarchies; for in republics ſomewhat is very like it, where an inferior officer this year is ſuperior the next, and ſo the other in viciſſitude; but if it be examined, it will be found very different, and juſtly to be excepted againſt in monarchy, the difference and diſtinction of perſons, being one of the chief pillars that ſupport it, as the equality of perſons doth the other government; nor is it poſſible for any great officer, who hath thereby extraordinary, and but neceſſary power to ſerve a prince, to aſſume and exerciſe that authority with confidence and courage, who knows he can be poſſeſſed of it but for a year, and all other people know ſo too: I ſay, there are two reaſons which keep us from much experience of this kind; the one, that men

in place and authority, who by an active life have arrived to that ſtation, and ſtill retain the vigour and ſtrength of body and mind, or believe they do ſo, rarely have an inclination to give over their employment; the other, when they have done ſo, and find themſelves at eaſe in their fortune, without which there can be no repoſe, they grow to reflect upon the rocks and the ſhelves upon which they have been near ſhipwrecked in their former voyage, and of which they then took little notice, and from thence contract an averſion to venture themſelves again to ſea. For the former of theſe, except they are in a declining age, men ſeldom think that they have need of a receſs, and that they ſhall improve their underſtanding by it; they find the very practice and exerciſe they are obliged to, in the road of their employment, doth every day add to their abilities, as no doubt it doth: nor can it be imagined, that men in that condition of life, are without much contemplation and revolvings of what they do or hear; but that is not that kind of contemplation I propoſe towards their better information. It is an obſervation that good fellows make, that a quarter of the wine will keep a man drunk that firſt made him ſo, notwith-

ſtanding the ſleeps he takes between; becauſe the firſt fumes being ſtill kept in motion, the moiſture of the brain cannot reſiſt the operation, till it hath recovered its original temper and ſolidity: ſo it is in buſineſs, which produces a kind of intoxication, or a tumult in the faculties of the mind; it is not the ordinary ſleep that nature requires, or thoſe calm reflections which wiſe men cannot be without, nor the ſhort recreations and vacations which are always allowed to the moſt buſy men, that can enough refreſh a perſon worn out or tired with the conſtant tranſactions of difficult and knotty employments; the brain will retain a warmth, and the mind ſome agitation from the continued motions, which can never be allayed but by ſuch a receſs as makes all rooms vacant, and without ſo much as an imagination of future activity: and ſuch a kind of retreat as this is very hard to be diſpoſed unto: the importunity of friends will diſſuade it as perilous to the conſtitution, and like to impair health, and ſo ſhorten life; ſervants will reſiſt it for their own ſake, yet upon pretences of affection to their maſters; at leaſt the deferring it cannot be without ſome ſuch convenience as will be hearkened unto; but above all, the appre-

henſion of being leſs regarded by other men, and expoſed to the inſolence of thoſe who may be thereby encouraged to enter into expoſtulations for paſt diſcourteſies, do at laſt prevail to continue in that poſt, from which he might very honourably have departed, till by ſome accidents, he might but did not foreſee, he is thrown out of it with obloquy and diſgrace, and ſo expoſed to the worſt of thoſe indignities, for avoiding whereof he declined the only remedy. Without doubt, the voluntary departure from, and intire change of a condition of life in which a man hath been long delighted, without having cauſe to be diſpleaſed with it, cannot but meet with great reluctancy, except it proceeds from a virtuous habit of mind, and a total withdrawing the thoughts from this world, and affixing them for the future upon eternity; and yet they may by the benefit of much cogitation and the conſcience of being able to do good, which hath always a great operation upon the ſpirit of a good man, innocently return to the acting a new part in the world: which, if his faculties remain the ſame they were, he will perform with a wonderful luſtre and ſufficiency, and much the more from the benefit of the reſt he hath given him,

and having been purely diveſted from all the thoughts which could perplex him, and ſo arriving to that ſerenity of mind that is then the natural product of a wiſe and learned contemplation.

For the other ſort of men, who have prevailed with themſelves to make this retreat, and find themſelves in poſſeſſion of it, it is much more natural to adhere obſtinately to it, and to have a peremptory averſion to embark themſelves into that ocean, than it was to deſire to be on ſhore. Let no man doubt, that there is ſo tranſcendent a joy and delight in that well-choſen and well-inſtructed ſolitude, wherein he enjoys a ſecond fruition of whatſoever was agreeable to him in the active part of his life, without the fatigue it coſt him, by a ſober recollection, that he can more eaſily part with life itſelf than with the ſolitarineſs of it; in which he is without any melancholy reflections, except ſuch as adminiſter vivacity to his underſtanding by the information and reformation of it. He recalls to his remembrance the frowns and imperiouſneſs of his ſuperiors towards him, or his own condeſcenſions to divert them; and then triumphs in the liber-

ty and principality he enjoys in his own houſe, without a rival or competitor He is as active as he was before, with leſs trouble of body and mind, and finds new pleaſures in the place of thoſe with which he was before enough ſatiated; a garden and a park ſupplies him with greater variety and more innocent divertiſement, than the city and the court uſed to do. He was hitherto ſo much perplexed with what related to the public, that he never had a full joy in his own domeſtics, nor thoſe a ſufficient protection and providence from him: now is in poſſeſſion of the company and converſation of his own wife, which he ſeldom had before; he is acquainted with his own children, who were before ſtrangers to him, and whom he makes wiſe by his inſtruction; he keeps no more ſervants than he employs, and obliges them to be pious and dutiful; he regulates his expences by what he hath, and not by what he hopes to have; and if he finds his fortune to be more narrow than he could wiſh it, he preſently retrenches thoſe wiſhes; and then he finds likewiſe, that to have little and not to care for much, yields the ſame comfort and ſatisfaction. In a word, he enjoys all the pleaſures within himſelf that he would wiſh for, and

the ſame delights that Diocleſian had in his garden, which were greater than he had enjoyed in the government of the world, when he had adminiſtered it eighteen years, and which he would not depart from, to be reſtored to the poſſeſſion of. What arguments can have ſtrength and force enough to draw an honeſt and prudent man from his ſo near approach to heaven, into the ſtorms and tempeſts of this world, and to reſign all that tranquillity to the rude contentions of the court? There cannot be imagined any attractive powerful enough in ſuch a caſe, but the abſolute injunction and command of the ſupreme authority; which an honeſt and conſcientious man can hardly reſiſt, and the doing whereof would deprive him of that felicity, for the preſervation whereof he hath preſumed to be diſobedient. And it may be, if princes did exerciſe this high point of ſovereignty, by compelling men who have been very conſpicuous in action, to come again into the light out of this beloved retreat, their affairs might be much improved by it, and many haſty and precipitate reſolutions be prevented, by the ſage advice and obſervation of ſuch as are known to have had great experience. And by this means the bring-

ing ſuch revolutions into requeſt and practice, the former claſſis of men might be the oftner induced to diſmiſs their buſineſs before they are diſmiſſed; and moſt of thoſe conſiderations which terrify them from it, would make little impreſſion upon them, when they are not only diſcouraged to make any barbarous attempt upon the reputation of a perſon who hath left a good fame of his actions, but diſcern, that it is probable, that they may again ſee him in the ſame or a greater adminiſtration.

To conclude this diſquiſition, we ſhall only add, that there may be one circumſtance that hath not been yet mentioned, and which may worthily have as great an influence upon ſober men, in their election to what courſe of life they will dedicate their ſtudies, as any inclination or impulſion from their own natures; and that is, the temper of the time, the age, and the climate in which they live; for there are *vitia temporum*, as well as *vitia hominum*. There may be ſuch a current and torrent of vice of the climate, that a man of modeſty and virtue is not only too weak to withſtand it, but even to be overwhelmed by it, and involved in the infamy of it, though

not the guilt: there may be ſuch a levity and vanity to intoxicate the moſt active part of the people, or thoſe to whom the conduct of moſt action is intruſted, that the ſobriety of advice may not only not be hearkened to, but the perſon who gives it rendered ſo ridiculous, that he can never after become uſeful. The raſhneſs and precipitations of counſels may be ſuch, the inadvertencies in thoſe accidents which may probably fall out to diſappoint the ſucceſs, and the unſteddineſs and irreſolution in proſecuting the ways agreed on, that wary men may reaſonably be unwilling to bear a part in them, which are liable to ſo much reproach, and the iſſue thereof ſo diſcernable; but above all, the principles of religion and juſtice may be ſo little inſiſted upon and obſerved in the counſels, and the power of the weak and wilful and wicked perſons ſo predominant, that all wiſe animadverſions are ingrateful, ineffectual, and render the authors of them at the mercy of thoſe who do not approve them: in all theſe caſes, and ſome other, men do think themſelves excuſable, if they avoid and fly all the occaſions and opportunities that may carry them into ſuch infectious company, and engage them in ſuch infamous tranſactions; and

chuſe rather to ſleep in the moſt dark and obſcure cells, and to be buried in perpetual ſilence and oblivion, than to be taken notice of, when ſuch unwarrantable things are done and countenanced, though themſelves are not only innocent, but known or believed to be ſo. There is an agony and torment that a generous and worthy perſon undergoes, by hearing diſſolute and profane diſcourſes, and by the ſight of impious and ſcandalous actions, which inflict a more ſenſible pain than can be expreſſed; and it may be is greater than can reſult from any wound in the fleſh or fracture in the bone; yet after all theſe diſcouragements, it may be reaſonably thought that a man of virtue and magnanimity had better engage himſelf in this peſtilent air than fly from it; there never was contagion ſo venomous that deſtroyed all that were near it, and the ſurvivers are commonly looked upon as men born to ſome more than ordinary purpoſe. He cannot be abſolved in point of duty to his country, who, becauſe it is invaded by a triumphant army, will not liſt himſelf for its defence; and when the ſafety of a nation is more threatened from within than from without, from being deceived by unfaithful and undiſcerning counſellors, than

from the ſtrength and power of a foreign enemy, he is very inexcuſable that will not do all he can to diſcover and prevent the miſchief, with what hazard ſoever to himſelf. Princes may be as eaſily deceived by thoſe they truſt, as other men can be; nay, they may, by the operation of ſome predominant paſſion or appetite, conſpire with others to deceive themſelves, but they can never be willing to be undone; and how late ſoever they diſcern their ruin that approaches, and how they have been couzened and betrayed by the promoters of it; if by the former withdrawing of good men, they then ſhall be without that aſſiſtance which is neceſſary to their preſervation, thoſe withdrawers are liable to a fouler reproach, at leaſt an equal to thoſe who have been firſt in the conſpiracy.

There is another argument of intereſt and ſafety, that may rather induce worthy men and of active ſpirits, even in the worſt conjunctures, to put themſelves as near the ſtage as they can, than to withdraw to a dark and quiet retreat till the ruining tempeſt be over. In the firſt, he moves in his proper ſphere, where, if it be his fate, he periſhes more decently than he can a-

void it: beſides, no man can tell how far the particular and remarkable virtue and diſcretion of a ſingle man can contribute in ſome article of time towards the reformation of a general diſorder; there being naturally ſuch a prerogative in doing well, that puts guilt out of countenance when it is moſt prevalent; and the worſt men are often found not to be ſo bad as they were thought to be, and are weary of their follies, and deſire to undo the miſchief they have done. If it proves to be otherwiſe, and that iniquity proſpers in its rage and obſtinacy, the retired man is in as much danger in his vault, as the moſt active is upon the ſtage; and we ſhall find as many who were aſſaſſinated in the time of Cinna, Sylla and Marius, as likewiſe in that of the triumvirate, of thoſe, who, by abſenting and concealing themſelves, thought to have eſcaped the general miſery, as of thoſe who walked the ſtreets. In thoſe black ſeaſons, men are more obnoxious by their virtues than in their perſons: *He is grievous unto us even to behold, for his life is not like other mens, his ways are of another faſhion*, was charge enough in Solomon's time, and hath continued ever ſince to be ſo. Since then no providence of our own can direct

us to make choice of our condition of life, that may not be ſubject to many infelicities, we ſhall do moſt wiſely ſo to diſpoſe of ourſelves, that if it be poſſible our lives may be uſeful and beneficial to the public, or our deaths comfortable to ourſelves.

BRITISH
3 AP 86
MUSEUM

THE END.